New Jersey
Language Arts Literacy
Curriculum Framework

Chapter 4

Vignettes for Language Arts Literacy

VIGNETTES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Experiences in the classroom are the substance of stories, stories that illuminate what children know and can do and what teachers do in turn to guide students to new levels of understanding and proficiency. The vignettes on the following pages present just these kinds of stories and illustrate how skilled teachers integrate the individual language arts literacy standards and their indicators into a single, well-balanced lesson or unit.

The vignettes, which are grouped by grade level (elementary, middle, and secondary), represent the diverse instructional experiences that students at these levels need in order to develop literacy skills and behaviors. By instinct, we turn to those vignettes that pertain directly to our educational responsibilities. Yet, we need to read all the vignettes; the stories at the other grade levels can contribute to our understanding. As teachers, we need to know what prior experiences students bring to the classroom and to anticipate what curriculum goals will form our students' future educational program.

We should be able to find our own teaching practices reflected in some vignettes and instructional approaches that we do not use in others. The variety provides a valuable model of the many ways we help students develop and enhance their literacy skills. We need to approach each vignette with the questions, "What is there here that I can use with my students? What material am I using that will lend itself to this instructional approach? How might the strategies and techniques described in this vignette improve my students' learning?"

The format of the vignettes is designed to help teachers and administrators focus on key aspects of instructional planning and implementation. Each vignette addresses specific standards and their progress indicators for language arts literacy and cross-content workplace readiness. These focus indicators are identified in the box at the beginning of each vignette. The left-hand column presents the story; the right-hand column contains annotations or glosses that give the rationale for the specific teaching techniques and student behaviors described in the vignette. Following each vignette are three additional components: assessment possibilities for the learning experience conveyed in the story; questions for teacher reflection about the learning experience; and possible extensions that teachers could use to enhance students' literacy development. We can use these components as the basis for discussion with colleagues and for personal reflection.

In live classrooms, a vibrant curriculum addresses many of the indicators identified in the language arts literacy and cross-content workplace readiness standards. The vignettes in this chapter similarly encompass several standards and multiple indicators in these two critical areas. The matrix on pages 42–44 provides a summary of those indicators most clearly addressed in each story or vignette. You may see the potential for others.

No one vignette is meant to provide a comprehensive narrative of teaching and learning. Rather, it is in the collection of stories that we see the broad reach of an educational program grounded in the standards. The stories that follow the matrix are based on actual instructional approaches used by New Jersey educators in their classrooms. These vignettes are presented with profound respect for the children and regard for their future as literate citizens.

A   ETTES

FEATURES OF THE VIGNETTES

Identifies content standards and progress indicators addressed in the vignette →

Presents a vignette that models instructional strategies for targeting specific standards and indicators →

Presents possible methods for observing and assessing student learning and performance →

Introduces questions to extend thinking about teaching and learning strategies and results →

Identifies related resources that support instruction →

VIGNETTES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY ▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼

Short Story and Film: **Cross-Grade Collaborations**
Elementary/Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 7-8, 10] 3.2 [1, 8] 3.3 [1, 7-8, 18] 3.4 [1, 23, 26, 32] 3.5 [1, 12, 14, 16]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 8-13] 4 [1-3, 6, 9-10]

Ms. Mellody, first-grade teacher, and Mr. Devereaux, eleventh- and twelfth-grade World Literature teacher, decided to have their students work concurrently on multifaceted projects concerning *The Secret of Roan Inish*, the Celtic-based short story and the film that writer/director John Sayles adapted from it. These projects would culminate in a sharing of the projects at the high school.

Mr. Devereaux visited the elementary classroom to introduce *The Secret of Roan Inish* and begin the oral reading of the story. Before beginning to read, he asked the students to think about favorite relatives they liked to see. At the end of the introductory reading, the children responded in a chain of associations—some more appropriate than others—linking the story to their own experiences:

"I visit my grandmother in Florida, and we go to the beach together."

"My family goes to the shore in the summer."

"My brother lives with my father. I miss him."

Possible Assessments:

1. Ask high school students to complete survey/response sheets assessing the value and success of the enterprise and commenting on things learned from the experience.

2. Monitor and record notes on the participation of individual high school students in the class discussions.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could this activity be modified for use with literature of other cultures?
2. How can skill building be incorporated into the project?

Extension Activities:

1. The teachers can videotape the viewing/celebratory session for later discussion with each of the classes.

2. Guest speakers, including family members or friends of the students, or members of the community, can be invited to talk about their previous homes in this or other countries.

Resource:

Fry, Rosalie K. (1995). *The Secret of Roan Inish*. New York: Hyperion.

NEW JERSEY LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK   1

Focus

Cross-age collaboration provides authentic audiences for communications at both levels.

For primary-grade students, oral reading allows access to texts too difficult for their independent reading and provides models of good literary language.

← **Identifies teaching and learning strategies and results**

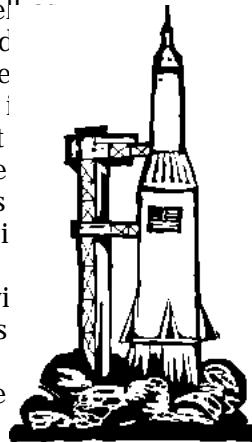← **Provides suggestions for extending the instruction and learning targeted in the vignette**

Thematic Unit : **From Research to Oral Production**
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [2, 5, 8–9, 13] 3.2 [6, 8] 3.3 [4, 7–8, 10–12]
	3.4 [1, 6–10, 12, 16] 3.5 [2, 7, 10, 12–14, 17]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [1–3] 3 [1–15] 4 [1–7, 9–11] 5 [3–5]

As part of an interdisciplinary thematic unit, students in Ms. Andrews' class researched, prepared for, and took an imaginary trip to Mars. As a culminating activity for the unit, the students presented their research findings and experiences in an "off-Broadway production." The script contained narratives, dramatizations, and songs.

Focus

During the month-long unit, students researched science topics (air/vacuums, weightlessness, propulsion, and botany); health topics (exercise physiology, muscle tone, diet); mathematics topics (distance, speed, weight ratios); and other areas suggested by the students' interests and questions as they prepared for the "voyage." As they learned more about these topics, students wrote journal entries and letters home explaining, for example, how muscles atrophy in a weightless environment and how space travelers have to run regularly on a treadmill to maintain muscle tone.

Individual curriculum goals are enhanced when integrated into a cross-disciplinary unit and extended by student inquiry.

Students explored technology by building a spacecraft from a refrigerator box. They covered the box with Styrofoam™ lunch trays wrapped in aluminum foil and cut plastic for the portholes. As they worked with the aluminum foil, students discussed the properties of heat and friction in space, as well aspects of ecology on Earth, a topic stimulated collection of the Styrofoam™ lunch trays. Whe found that they had collected 300 lunch trays less than a week, several students asked what happened to all the uncollected trays over the course of a school year. Students wrote letters the Superintendent of Schools, expressing thei concerns about the lack of recycling in the schools. Eventually, the Director of Food Servi came to their classroom to explain regulations about washing reusable trays and the limitations elementary schools face when they have no facilities for food preparation.

Students identify unexpected problems and create their own solutions when they engage in complex multi-modal activities.

The unit also involved important language arts and social studies outcomes. Students maintained logs of their voyage to, and landing on, Mars. They wrote letters to family members at home describing the trip and the planet and speculating about the possible colonization and planet development. At one point in the unit, the students compared their trip to Mars with the Pilgrims' voyage to the New World, writing about the reasons for the two journeys, the supplies needed, and the similarities and differences in the two contexts.

Student learning increases in classrooms where divergent thinking is encouraged.

In the areas of art and architecture, students researched, designed, and made helmets, surface vehicles, and biodomes out of Tupperware, cardboard, and other supplies. These models were displayed in the classroom and later in the school display case in the main corridor. Ms. Andrews had students study computer images and photographs of the surface of Mars. From these they chose a reasonable landing site and potential locations for homes. In preparation for their voyage to Mars, students also studied the binary number system and discussed the use of the system to receive messages and pictures while in space.

Finally, they were ready for blastoff and their journey to Mars. While hurtling through space, they computed distances, speed, changes in weight, and estimated time of arrival. They also sampled astronauts' food and kept notes in their learning logs. Upon landing, they made a brief exploration of the surface and examined samples of the terrain. After returning to the ship, students wrote a letter back to a friend on Earth describing what they saw on the surface, what the temperature and gravity were like, their reasons for choosing the landing site, and the plans they had made for extended survival on Mars.

Upon their return to Earth, the class agreed that the time spent reading stories about space travel, researching the scientific aspects of the journey in books and CD–ROMs from the school library, and collecting articles and pictures from an electronic encyclopedia and the Internet had been well worth it. They wanted to share the information and their experience with the rest of the school and their parents in an "off-Broadway production."

Ms. Andrews thought this proposal was a good idea and asked students what information would be important to communicate to their audiences. The students began reviewing their learning logs for topics. As they brainstormed them, Ms. Andrews kept a list of the topics on large sheets taped to the board. Students used these ideas to script their production. They decided it should include some dramatized scenes, journal readings, and songs based on their experience. Ms. Andrews divided the class into teams that were responsible for selecting and writing the materials, constructing props and costumes, and creating commercials for vacations on Mars. During writing workshop, the teams worked on the project, conferring with each other and Ms. Andrews. Ms. Andrews used mini-lessons to teach the conventions of script writing and other skills that students needed to complete their production. She also enlisted the expertise of the art and music teachers, who provided technical and artistic support.

The afternoon of the performance, Ms. Andrews stood behind a backdrop, giving cues and playing taped music to accompany student singing. During the performance, students took roles in which individuals dramatized some aspect of space travel and the demands of living on Mars. Other students read journal entries about astronaut training, weightlessness, trip duration, and colonization of the planet. As a group, students sang about astronaut heroes of the past and their dreams about the future of

Rich thematic units incorporate activities for different learning styles and provide alternate forums for academic learning.

Writing helps students organize their thinking and learning.

Reflecting upon experience fosters self-assessment.

In transforming their learning into a new mode, i.e., performing, students demonstrate their understanding and knowledge.

Students appeal to their audience on different levels, from serious presentation to the humorous, while demonstrating their knowledge.

space exploration. Several students presented commercial messages: "Visit Mars. Stay at Aries Modular Motel on the awesome Red Planet." "It will take two years to reach Mars. Use my atomic treadmill to keep your muscles and bones in shape."

The production was well-received by students and parents at both performances, but more to the point, the students felt that all their research had contributed not only to their own learning but to that of their audiences.

Possible Assessments:

1. Videotape one performance so that students can view themselves and discuss the strengths of the presentation as well as places that could be improved.

2. Monitor student progress throughout the unit by observation, response to student letters and journal entries, and student-teacher conferences.

3. Direct students to write a reflective journal entry in which they assess their own success with the project and their reasons for that assessment.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are the benefits of this type of production in terms of student learning? Are the benefits worth the time required?

2. Where does the responsibility for learning rest in this unit? Why?

3. What effect does shifting the audience away from the teacher's desk have on student performance? How does this shift affect the teacher-student dynamic?

Extension Activities:

1. The Potato Growers of America have an essay contest available for elementary students since potatoes may be grown on Mars. Students could submit entries to the contest.

2. Students could create potato recipe books from Mars.

3. The physical education teacher can adapt some tumbling activities to simulate the effect of gravity on other planets.

4. The music teacher can introduce students to Ferdy Grofe's suite, The Planets.

Fables
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6–7, 10] 3.2 [2–3, 6] 3.3 [5–7, 10–12]
	3.4 [5, 8–9, 13–14, 32] 3.5 [7]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]

Focus

In his fourth-grade class, Mr. Workman introduced a unit on fables. His purpose was to promote student enjoyment of them, develop understanding of their common structure, and provide opportunity for students to create fables of their own. He began the unit by reading *Once a Mouse*, adapted by Marcia Brown. After students shared what they enjoyed about the story, he asked, "What do you notice about this story?"

Jenna answered, "The characters are animals."

Justin added, "Yeah, and the animals talk."

Camille noted, "It's shorter than some other stories you read to us."
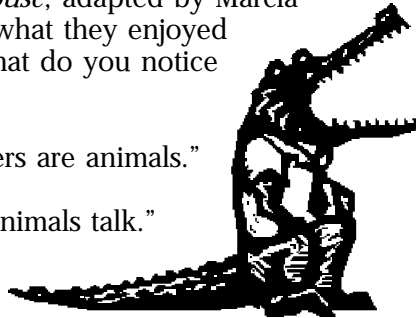
Ali said, "My mom used to read those stories to me. They end with some kind of lesson."

Reading is more meaningful when it is connected to personal experience.

Handing out booklets, Mr. Workman said, "These stories are called fables, and this one is *The Monkey and the Crocodile*, adapted by Paul Galdone. I'd like you to read it silently and then tell me how it's like other fables you have read. Think about how the illustrations help you to think about the story."

Use of all textual cues facilitates comprehension.

After reading, students raised their hands. Daphne reported, "This one has animals too, and they talk. I think there's a lesson, or maybe it explains something."

Mr. Workman nodded, "Let's list these as features of the fable." Based on student response, Mr. Workman listed *Title, Setting, Animals/Characters, Dialogue*, and *Lesson* on the board. During discussion, Mr. Workman asked students to explain each element, and the children also talked about how the animals were like people. They noticed that the lesson often came at the end of the fable. Mr. Workman also reminded the children, "Many fables were originally told, not written, and we would not have the fables if they hadn't been recited orally through the generations. Now, of course, we can write them and even type them on computers!"

Knowledge of story grammar helps students to organize their writing.

Then Mr. Workman told the children, "You seem to understand the components of a fable. Let's see if you can create a fable of your own. You can use these components as a checklist, or you can draw or web some ideas, or free-write if you like.

Clear teacher instructions help students understand and successfully complete the task.

Remember that when you write fables, you are using your imagination; but it is also important to include things you know. Choose animals you see each day or situations you've experienced." He assigned students to compose in pairs so that they could brainstorm ideas through discussion.

As students wrote, the teacher moved from desk to desk, reading segments, making suggestions, asking questions, and interjecting information, such as "Brian, you drew a great cat. What kind of problem would a cat run into? Class, remember that you can use your drawings in your texts. Lisa and Carlos, are you trying to decide how to punctuate conversation? You can use the fiction book you're reading now as a model for when to paragraph and use punctuation marks. Carlos, why don't you see how the author of *The Monkey and the Crocodile* punctuated his dialogue?"

One pair who finished early began to type its fable on the computer. To another pair who finished quickly, Mr. Workman suggested, "Your story tells a lot, but it doesn't help your readers make pictures in their minds. Why don't you try to add more details that show what happened rather than tell what happened. For example, what color is the tortoise in your story?"

When most of the students finished their initial drafts, Mr. Workman had all the students read their fables aloud. He instructed those listening to respond with a specific detail they liked and one question they had about the story, a procedure they had followed in previous shared reading. Mr. Workman reminded the students, "The questions will help you to focus on specific parts of your fables when you're revising them. What I see of your work today seems really good. I think some of you might want to submit these fables for our winter literary magazine."

By moving around the room, the teacher can quickly assess student progress and keep students on task.

Through teacher guidance, students learn the importance of detail for the reader.

Questioning texts enhances critical thinking.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor the quality of peer feedback provided during sharing time.

2. Appoint a class Editorial Board to review student fables.

3. Compare the successive drafts to assess students' ability to revise for meaning and edit for correctness.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what other ways could Mr. Workman have deepened student understanding of fables?

2. How does Mr. Workman structure his class so that he is a coach throughout the writing process?

3. Would a videotaped version of a fable have been equally effective as a prewriting stimulus?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could investigate the use of a particular animal in fables, e.g., the fox and the rooster or the fox and the crow, and identify recurring characteristics of each animal.

2. Invite students to create an anthology of their fables for a wider audience.

3. Have students script the polished fable as a drama to show how the same story can be represented in a different genre.

4. Discuss the tradition of storytelling, and invite a storyteller to visit the school.

5. Discuss ways in which fables are similar to and different from today's animated cartoons.

**Using Literate Behaviors to Support
Science Writing and Revision:** **Experiments with Air**
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 6–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–8] 3.3 [1, 4, 6–7, 10–12] 3.4 [4] 3.5 [2, 7, 12]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [7] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [2–3, 9–10] 5 [7]

Mrs. Jefferson's class was learning about the qualities of air. In this lesson, students performed experiments in class, discussed results, and wrote statements about how they proved that air exists. They also learned to make scientific predictions and to use the scientific method. As a follow-up to their writing, Mrs. Jefferson planned a lesson on editing for spelling and usage.

Focus

The experiment began as Mrs. Jefferson asked the class, "Children, what do you know about air?"

The teacher demonstrates how writing can be used to activate prior knowledge and to record information.

Melissa answered, "Air is all around us," and Tommy added, "My mom told me air is made of oxygen."

Writing their responses on chart paper, Mrs. Jefferson continued, "Is there air in outer space?"

After a long pause, Zakiyyah raised her hand and ventured, "There's no air in space 'cause astronauts need to wear space suits."

"Yes," Mrs. Jefferson responded, "but how do we know there is air here?"

Questions can scaffold and shape learning.

David explained that he knew there was air by blowing into his palm. Mrs. Jefferson then asked students to perform an experiment to test the existence of air in their classroom and discuss the results. She gave each child a plastic bag but cautioned, "We need to be very careful with plastic bags. Make sure you keep them away from your face." She added, "We use bags every day to hold things. Do you think they can hold air? See if you can capture some air in your bag, and tie the bag to keep the air inside." Working in pairs, students trapped air by swinging their bags and securing the ties. Then they pressed on the bags to determine whether air was indeed present.

Experimentation enables students to test and confirm their hypotheses.

After the bag experiments, Mrs. Jefferson placed an inverted glass on top of a bowl of water. As she pushed down on the glass, she tilted it slightly, allowing a bubble to escape to the surface. "What is this bubble?"

Concrete demonstrations clarify abstract concepts.

Anne Marie said, "Air."

"Where did the air come from?" asked Mrs. Jefferson.

"From the glass," replied a few of the students.

"Let's see what happens now," suggested Mrs. Jefferson. She stuffed a paper towel in the bottom of a dry glass and asked what would happen if she inverted this glass and pushed it into the water. Students predicted various results, which she wrote down on a separate sheet of chart paper. Mrs. Jefferson next inverted the glass and pushed it down. The students noticed that the level of water rose. Kim observed that the water level was higher than the paper towel inside the glass.

June pointed out, "The paper will get wet"; but when Mrs. Jefferson removed the glass, the towel was still dry. June asked, "How did that happen?"

"That's because the towel was in air," said Anne Marie.

The other students agreed. They reviewed their predictions on the chart paper and identified those that were correct.

Mrs. Jefferson next asked the class to recall the steps they went through to test for the existence of air by posing the following questions: What did you do first? What did you do after testing with plastic bags? What happened with the cup? Students returned to pairs and shared one piece of evidence about the existence of air.

Then Mrs. Jefferson asked them to write one statement on the existence of air in their learning logs. Walking around the room, Mrs. Jefferson found a number of interesting learning log entries. Olivia wrote, "We felled [filled] the bag. Can you fell [feel] the air? Now you know that air is avewear [everywhere] and it looked like a Big Billele [Balloon]." Ricardo noted, "We sok [shook] a bag and we saw air in it. It was grat [great] and I culd't [couldn't] believe my eyes." Mrs. Jefferson told the students they would be using words from their entries as a basis of a spelling lesson the next day.

The following day, Mrs. Jefferson asked students to review their journal entries from the day before and circle any words they had trouble spelling. After walking around the class to assist, Mrs. Jefferson asked the students which of their circled words were important for writing about air. The class selected six words that were important to them. These became the basis for a spelling lesson. One of the words the students chose was *shook*.

"What words have the same ending sound or rhyme with *shook*?" the teacher asked. The students offered *took*, *book*, and *look*. Mrs. Jefferson wrote these words on the board. "Now," she said, "what words have the same beginning sound that you hear in *shook*?" The students suggested *shell*, *ship*, and *shop*. Mrs. Jefferson wrote these words on the board.

"Using what you know about the beginning and ending sounds you heard in *shook*, how would you spell the word?" Several students correctly spelled the word. "Terrific!" said Mrs. Jefferson. "You used what you know about other words to spell a new

Initial predictions are accepted and will be confirmed or disproved at the end of the experiment.

Encouraging students to reflect on problem-solving procedures helps them develop metacognitive awareness.

Allowing students to use transitional spelling gives them access to their rich oral vocabulary.

By participating in lesson planning, children feel they are contributing to their learning.

Knowledge of spelling patterns is important for independent reading and writing.

Tapping students' prior knowledge of phonics during direct instruction contributes to their literacy development.

one. Write this word in the spelling section of your learning log so you can use it to check your spelling in the future." Mrs. Jefferson continued the spelling lesson with the other five words, again emphasizing patterns and use of prior knowledge.

When the spelling instruction ended, Mrs. Jefferson told the students, "Now let's turn our learning log entries into reports that we can publish on the downstairs bulletin board. I would like you to get into pairs to work on your papers. You should focus on two points as you edit. First, correct the spelling words we covered today. Second, use capital letters to begin each sentence. You can also illustrate your reports with a drawing about your experience." As students worked on their drafts, Mrs. Jefferson went about the room helping individuals and making anecdotal notes about their progress.

Drawing is an important component of writing in the primary years. For some, it functions as a prewriting activity; for others, it functions as a postwriting illustration of ideas.

Possible Assessments:

1. Determine whether students recall the procedures in sequence.

2. Have students conduct a self-directed experiment for further practice with scientific procedures. Examples are (a) putting celery in grape juice to observe absorption, or (b) sprinkling potato or apple slices with lemon juice to prevent discoloration.

3. Review final drafts to determine whether students have successfully used the two editing points identified by the teacher.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what order were the activities structured? What might happen if the order of events were changed or if the approach had invited inquiry?

2. Why did the teacher allow students to write down their own statements about air, rather than dictate a statement to them?

3. What is the effect of pairing students at two critical points during the lesson, rather than asking students to work alone?

4. How does Mrs. Jefferson's attitude toward developmental spelling affect student work?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could observe several experiments to see whether they can identify commonalities in the procedures.

2. Students might write humor or adventure stories using the principles of air and water.

3. Engage students in researching whales or submarines to discover some applications of the principles they have examined.

Writing to Organize Information: Apple Classification
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–8] 3.3 [7, 9–12, 16]
	3.4 [4, 15] 3.5 [2, 8, 13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1, 5] 3 [1–3, 6–14] 4 [1–3, 9–10]

Students in Mrs. Langley's class were learning to keep records of their reactions to sensory experience by tasting a variety of apples and brainstorming for descriptive responses. After reviewing what they had learned about the need for vivid vocabulary, they recorded their observations on charts and in their science journals.

Focus

Mrs. Langley was in the middle of a thematic unit involving close observation and recorded description of sensory data. She modeled the procedure for observing and recording information, using a Rome apple. "First, I'm going to guess what this apple will taste like. I think it will be sweet. Now I'll cut a piece and sample it. The taste is rather bland, flat. The skin is bright red, and the apple is very round." While completing a chart on the board, she said, "I am recording all of this in my science journal. Scientists have to be very careful and detailed in their descriptions. When you write in your journals, be sure to use words that clearly explain your observations."

Learning is facilitated when teachers model desired outcomes.

She then directed her students to work in groups as scientists and to predict, observe, describe, and contrast five different kinds of apples. At their tables, students examined the apples according to the senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound. They discussed their findings with group members and listed adjectives on a chart they had been given for their science journals. On these charts, they identified the apple types and their sensory responses to each one (e.g., taste: sharp, sweet, sour, flat).

Visual arrays, such as charts, help students to organize information.

Mrs. Langley asked questions that enabled members of each group to share their findings with the entire class. Sandra commented, "This Granny Smith pinches the corners of my mouth. It's sour."

Students' vocabulary can be developed through observation and discussion.

Mrs. Langley asked Sandra, "Is it more sour than the MacIntosh?"

Sandra said, "Yes," and her group members agreed.

"Is it the most sour of the apples you've tasted?" Mrs. Langley asked. The group agreed it was. Mrs. Langley then engaged children in a discussion of the adjectives they used. "Is a word like *sour* more descriptive than *good*? Could we say it tastes like lemon drops? How would this help us understand what someone thinks about an apple's taste?" Students brainstormed other descriptive words for the taste, smell, and feel of apples. During this time, they offered metaphoric terms, such as *silky* and *icy*, as well as more explicit comparisons: "This Delicious apple tastes like paper after I tasted the Granny Smith."

Concrete examples by the teacher facilitate students' critical thinking. Her questions encourage students to move toward metaphor and simile.

At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Langley instructed the students to put their charts in their science journals. "On the page across from your chart, I'd like you to write some other reactions to the apples. Which did you like most? Which did you like least? Be sure to explain your reasons." Students wrote in their journals for five minutes while their teacher assisted individual students. She noticed Lance had written, "I thought the Rome apple wud [would] taste good, but it tastes worse than the others." Mrs. Langley commented, "I'm glad you're using a comparative like *worse*, Lance, but do you think that's a good, descriptive word for a scientist?"

After thinking a moment, Lance answered, "But it's bitter."

"Ah," Mrs. Langley said, "*bitter* is a much better word." Then the class shared their responses.

At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Langley explained to students, "Later today we will study the regions of the United States that these apples come from. Keep your journals for tomorrow when we will look at other experiments we've done this year to see if our predictions and observations are getting better. Soon we will be publishing our best science writing in a book that I will be using with next year's class. That means that each of us will have to revise and edit at least one of our journal entries to get it in shape for publication. We will be working with those entries in our writing workshop when we start to put our own science textbook together."

Careful teacher questioning can reinforce concepts and develop vocabulary for those who may need more assistance.

Motivation increases when learning is placed in authentic and purposeful contexts.

Students' learning is more complete when interconnections are made across disciplines.
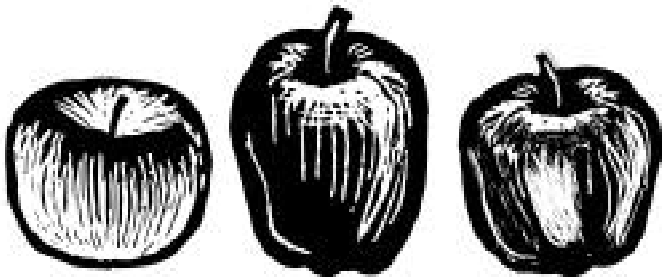
Possible Assessments:

1. Examine the lists students have made for uses of descriptive language, such as metaphor and simile.

2. Evaluate students' writing about their favorite apples and the reasons for their choices.

3. Review successive entries in the science journals for improvement in scientific prediction and observation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does writing their ideas affect the things students say about the apples?

2. What is the purpose of having students work in groups to develop descriptions?

3. What other subjects might be incorporated in this thematic unit on apples?

4. How does hands-on experience with an everyday object like an apple enhance learning for students of varied backgrounds and learning abilities?

Extension Activities:

1. Invite a produce manager from a local supermarket to come to class to discuss the procedures for obtaining, displaying, and selling produce from around the world.

2. Students could write commercials for their favorite apples, incorporating the descriptive words they have written.

3. Students could listen to the folktale, Johnny Appleseed.

Listening in the Writing Response Groups: **Bear Biographies**
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 7–8, 12] 3.2 [1–3, 5–7, 9] 3.3 [1–7, 10–12]
	3.4 [2, 4, 8–9, 12] 3.5 [2, 10, 12]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 10] 4 [2–3, 9]

Students in Mrs. Oliver's class were working on oral and written language skills in a unit on bears. After studying bears to learn about habitat, diet, migration, and hibernation, these students read several fiction and nonfiction big books about bears. They also brought in their favorite b from home, "interviewed" them, and wrote down important information in their learnin logs as preparation for a lesson on writing bear biographies. Children who did not have bears at home had selected from Mrs. Oliver's collection a guest bear who "visited" with them for several days.

Before her students arrived in class, Mrs. Oliver had placed bear paws on the floor of the corridor leading into the classroom. Students entered the room following the paw prints. When they arrived at their desks, students were told to take a moment to write some things they knew about bears. Mrs. Oliver then asked students to share what they had written. As they volunteered their ideas, she wrote each on a felt-backed strip and placed it on the storyboard.

Mrs. Oliver pointed to the list of student responses she had listed on the strips. "We know a good deal about bears. I think we can organize this information." She hung four large felt bear paws on the wall. "Your information answers questions about bears: What? Where? How? and When?" On each paw she wrote one of these words. "We need to decide which question each information strip answers. Help me put these strips under the correct paw."

After they organized the information strips, Mrs. Oliver told the children they would be writing biographies about the bears they had brought from home. "You can use this information, and you can go back to the books you have read for more ideas. You can also use your imaginations. Why don't we write one biography together first about a grizzly bear." Mrs. Oliver began by writing students' volunteered sentences on the board: "My bear is dark and large. He is a grizzly bear. He lives in the north woods." As she wrote, she asked children to point to the paw from which they had gotten information or tell where their idea had come from.

Focus

Learning is likely to be more meaningful when students can make personal connections.

Activating students' prior knowledge enriches their ideas for writing.

Classification activities help students to see relationships between ideas.

Students learn to use information from a variety of sources.

"Now we'll begin our individual stories. We will write for fifteen minutes. I will be around to help you with your papers; but first, I'm also going to start writing a story. As we write, let's remember to look at our lists when we need more ideas." She sat at the desk and began writing. When Kenneth asked how to spell *cage*, Mrs. Oliver said, "I'm writing right now, Kenneth. Circle the word, and we'll check for spelling later. This is something everyone can do for troublesome words." Kenneth continued to write. After the class had been writing for seven minutes, Mrs. Oliver circulated to help students, such as Kenneth, with their individual questions and to encourage any students who were having difficulty getting started. She also recorded words students had misspelled but had not circled.

> The teacher models the need for sustained concentration during writing.

> Ongoing teacher support enables all children to achieve their goals.

At the end of the writing time, Mrs. Oliver divided her class into groups of four to read their stories to each other. Students in each group selected a number from 1 to 4 to indicate the order in which they would read. Mrs. Oliver then brought four students to the middle of the room to fishbowl the sharing procedure for all her students. She reminded them that these were rough drafts and that they could get more ideas from listening to other students read their writing.

> The fishbowl demonstration models appropriate reading, listening, and responding behaviors.

First, Peter in the fishbowl group read, "My bear's name is Sparky. He is a brown bear. He eats fish."

Mrs. Oliver asked Veronica what she liked about Peter's story. Veronica answered, "The fish."

> Depending on the students' level of development, the teacher might probe the student's response for further elaboration.

Mrs. Oliver responded, "Very good, Veronica. You were listening carefully."

> Listening activities can foster critical thinking and improve students' vocabulary.

Kristina read, "My bear is pure white. She is a polar bear. She lives near the north pole."

Peter said, "I like that her bear is *pure white*."

Angela read, "My bear has brown fur. He is sick." Mrs. Oliver asked Angela why she thought her bear was sick. "Because his fur has holes in it." Mrs. Oliver complimented Angela on her original thoughtful observations of her bear and reminded students that they could add additional details to their biographies. After Angela's comment, several children added information to their biographies.

Mrs. Oliver had the other students summarize what they had learned from watching the demonstration group. Then she reminded them, "When you share in your groups, be sure to talk about the things you like in each biography. But be as specific as this group was."

> Summarization facilitates students' recall and organization of ideas.

All the students met in groups of four and took turns reading drafts to each other and revising their writing. For instance, several students in one group wrote down additional information after hearing Melissa read, "My bear lives in the zoo. He likes to

swim in cold water." At the end of the lesson, Mrs. Oliver told students to place their papers in their folders in order to have them ready for revision the following day.

The following day, Mrs. Oliver instructed students to work with a partner to add any information they thought a reader would need to know. She also told them to circle any words they thought might be misspelled. Mrs. Oliver walked from pair to pair, asking questions about content, reminding students that some misspelled words were written correctly on the paws taped to the walls, or spelling the word for the child. She recorded the words misspelled by several children so that she could include them in a future spelling lesson. The students then prepared edited final drafts for display in the main corridor of the school.

Peer response is an important part of the writing process.

Teacher-directed spelling lessons based on students' needs are an important part of literacy development.

Possible Assessments:

1. Observe student performance in groups, including students' ability to make use of peer feedback.

2. Evaluate final drafts for completeness of information, correctness of targeted spelling words, and use of developmentally appropriate conventions.

3. Engage students in self-assessment by asking them to talk about their experience of developing bear biographies after listening to others in class.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What is the value of Mrs. Oliver writing with her class? What problems might arise?

2. What role does personal experience play in each child's success with this activity?

3. What effects do the fishbowl activity and peer listening groups have on student performance?

Extension Activities:

1. Students from an upper grade can come to this classroom to discuss those bears that are endangered species.

2. Students can research more bear information with help from the media specialist using the library, books, films, and CD-ROMs.

3. Students can track their bears' habitats and migration habits on a map of the United States or the world.

Reading Inferentially:

Multicultural Literature
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6–8, 12] 3.2 [2–3, 5–7] 3.3 [1, 3, 7, 9]
	3.4 [4–6, 8–9, 12, 14–15] 3.5 [7]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1, 3] 3 [1–2, 4, 10] 4 [2–3, 6, 9]

Dr. Ramos wanted to determine how well her students understood the message of a folktale they were reading in class. Her students would demonstrate their understanding of the story by writing a response patterned upon an important element of the story.

Focus

After reading folktales from around the world, students in Dr. Ramos' class were discussing the qualities of a legend, fictional plot elements, and differences in setting and culture. Dr. Ramos then introduced the next part of the unit by saying, "For the next two weeks, boys and girls, we will be looking at the culture of the first inhabitants of our country. The author of this story calls them 'People of the Plains,' and they are wonderful storytellers. Today we will be reading a story about them called *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* by Tomie dePaola." To introduce the students to the book, she previewed the illustrations and asked for student predictions about the story.

Review of key literary concepts facilitates student learning.

Discussion of similarities and differences within a genre promotes students' ability to compare and contrast.

Use of pictorial clues for predictions encourages students to use all aspects of contextual cues to understand text.

After the students had read the story, Dr. Ramos asked them about the legend. The class discussed what they had learned about the People of the Plains and why the young boy felt unhappy. Then Dr. Ramos said, "Think about our last science project when we adopted a tree. Do you think we could grow trees or flowers from paintbrushes?" Lauren shook her head.

"Why do you say no, Lauren?" asked Dr. Ramon.

"Because we learned that trees grow from seeds."

"That's true in science, but in this story the boy has a gift….What does the word *gift* mean? What kinds of gifts are there?"

The teacher promotes students' inferential reading strategies through scaffolded questioning and discussion.

"The kind you get for your birthday?" Vanessa offered.

"Yes. But is that the kind of gift the boy in this story has?"

Bobby responded, "He can draw real good."

"Yes, Bobby, he can draw very well. He has the gift of drawing, a talent or ability. Now, let's see how well you understand the idea of a gift as it is presented in this story. Boys and girls, I'd like you to think about a gift you have, a special talent or ability, something you do very well, and write about it in your journal. Then, give yourself a name that the People of the Plains might use to express that gift, and tell why the name fits your gift. If you'd like to draw a picture or talk to a partner to get some ideas, that's fine. Sometimes, other people see gifts in us we do not even know we have."

Vocabulary is expanded by the teacher when she supplies synonyms.

By asking students to reflect on their special talents, the teacher promotes their self-esteem and motivation.

Reflecting on one's own learning con-

Students opened their journals and began drawing and writing. A number of them crossed out their first and second choices before settling on a name they thought fit their gift. After a brief period, Dr. Ramon asked students to read the names they had chosen and explain why the name suited their talent or gift. When all the students had contributed, Dr. Ramon said, "Now we'll put these names in our folders so that we can compare them later with the kinds of names we discover in other cultures. But before we leave this topic, I'd like you to write in your journals one thing you learned or one question you have about the story." After a minute or so of writing, Dr. Ramon closed the lesson by calling on students to read what they had written. Some pointed out aspects of the story that related to character or to culture. Some spoke of the vivid detail of the story while others commented on the way it was told. Instead of providing comments, several students asked questions, and Dr. Ramon noted, "Good questions can tell us how much we learn about a story as much as good comments can."

tributes to the development of a habit of inquiry.

Personal responses to literature are varied.

Assessment is ongoing and can be conducted through a variety of formats.

Possible Assessments:

1. Examine the relationship between the name the student has created and the qualities that the student intends to represent in the name.

2. Look at the questions and comments from the last journal entry to gauge student understanding.

3. Have students make a presentation to the class of the names and drawings that represent their talents. Listeners provide constructive feedback on each presentation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What kind of writing activities could precede the reading of this story?

2. How could a teacher use this lesson to create a greater awareness of language, especially metaphor?

3. What kind of response might a teacher make to a student who cannot discover a personal gift?

Extension Activities:

1. Students read similar stories from other cultures and compare various attitudes toward nature.

2. Students can use the names they created as a starting place to design their own legends, using what they have learned about narrative and dialogue. They can illustrate their legends as well.

3. Students compose name poems based on the letters of their gift names, arranged vertically on the page. After each letter, they supply a word that helps elaborate on their gift.

Drum

Roll

Upbeat

Musical

Marching

Everywhere

Rat-a-tat

Synthesizing Information for Composing: **Dinosaur Stories**
Primary

| Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [3, 7–8] 3.2 [2–3, 6–8, 9] 3.3 [1, 7–8, 10]
	3.4 [2] 3.5 [2, 8–10]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2–3, 5] 3 [1–2, 4–5, 8, 10–11]
	4 [1–3, 5, 9–10]

As part of a unit on dinosaurs, students in Mr. Lawrence's class were brainstorming ideas as prewriting for a story. They used various sources for their ideas, including trade books, library research, computer-generated information, and Dinosaur Fact Sheets they had maintained during their study. The information they gathered became the basis for composing individual stories containing specific details about dinosaurs.

Mr. Lawrence's classroom displayed posters of dinosaurs and dinosaur big books with vivid illustrations. Mr. Lawrence asked his students to take their Dinosaur Fact Sheets out of their desks. They had spent the previous day getting information about dinosaurs from books and from computer resources, such as *Encarta* and other CD-ROMs. Mr. Lawrence explained to his students that they were about to begin a writing activity using what they know about dinosaurs.

"First, let's listen to a story about dinosaurs." Students gathered on the carpet as Mr. Lawrence read and shared the illustrations for the story *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* by Bernard Most. At the end of the story, the teacher asked for student response to the text.

Ann said, "Each page begins with the words, 'If the dinosaurs came back.' Can I write my story that way?"

Mr. Lawrence pointed out, "Although this author used *if*, we don't have to. You may write what you see when you look out your imaginary windows. Can you imagine looking out your window and seeing dinosaurs moving about the neighborhood? Make sure that you use information about dinosaurs just as Mr. Most did. The length of the brontosaurus is important, especially if it transports large numbers of people. The strength and jaws of the tyrannosaurus are important too. And don't forget the spiky scales of the triceratops. These details will help you get ideas dinosaurs mig were alive to that these are dinosaurs wh people."

Side notes:
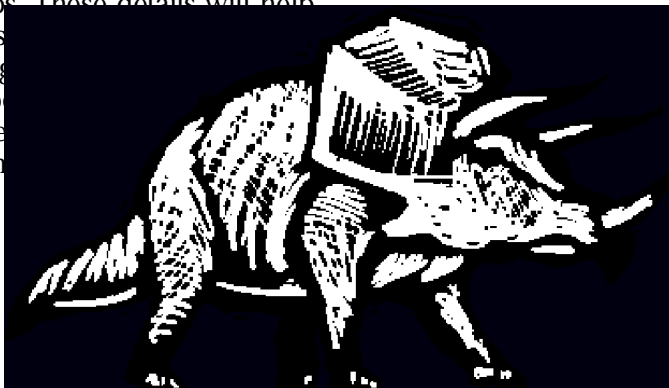
Focus

Environments rich in stimuli foster language learning and enhance schema development.

The story provides students with a model for their own writing.

The teacher models appropriate usage and promotes critical thinking by elaborating on a student-generated question.

As students began brainstorming ideas and questions, Mr. Lawrence wrote those ideas on a chart: (1) Why are the dinosaurs back? (2) Tell about the good things dinosaurs are doing. (3) Name the type of dinosaur. (4) What physical qualities are important for that dinosaur? (5) Where did you see the dinosaur? (6) Create a title for the story. For the last topic he showed examples of titles from stories they had read, as well as from a current newspaper.

Categorizing students' ideas stimulates student thinking about the topic.

Students began working. Some mapped ideas; some made lists; others began writing their texts while Mr. Lawrence circulated and coached students. He stopped the class after 20 minutes and said, "I'd like to spend the final ten minutes of the lesson discussing your thoughts. You might get a good idea from your classmates, so listen carefully, and write down any details you think you might use. We'll organize them tomorrow."

Students engage in a variety of prewriting activities, rather than using a single format.

For the last ten minutes of class, volunteers read what they had written while the other members of the class listened and sometimes added information to their own drafts. Mr. Lawrence reinforced specific details about any dinosaurs whenever students mentioned them. After each student read, he asked the class, "What do you remember from what we just heard?" in order to emphasize the importance of detail.

Students develop listening compre-hension skills while gathering ideas from peers.

As reinforcement for the specific details of their stories, Mr. Lawrence carried the topic over into his lesson on mathematics. "Now, we'll do some math. Using the article on dinosaurs we read yesterday, we'll lay our cord to show the size of some of these dinosaurs. We'll record the measurements in chalk on the playground. After we have marked the lengths and heights of the dinosaurs, we'll talk about those numbers in feet, yards, and meters. This research will give you even more specific detail for your dinosaur stories."

Cross-content study of a topic re-inforces and extends learning.

Possible Assessments:

1. Observe the variety and complexity of details written by the students.

2. Provide feedback to students through peer conferences.

3. Read the stories that students subsequently write to determine students' knowledge about dinosaurs.

4. Read the edited stories to determine student knowledge of textual conventions, such as capitalization and punctuation.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What other resources could teachers employ in this type of unit?

2. What other prewriting activities could the teacher introduce to help students grasp scientific facts?

3. How could the teacher help students to transform their raw list of ideas into organized text?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students research climate and habitat in the age of dinosaurs and contrast their findings with conditions today.

2. Teach the parts of a newspaper (e.g., editorials, cartoons, advertisements) so that students could write and publish a newspaper on dinosaurs.

3. Use student-made measuring devices to determine the size of dinosaurs and their relation to buildings and vehicles today.

Exploring Tall Tales
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 4, 7–8, 12] 3.2 [1, 3, 6–8] 3.3 [1–2, 5, 7, 9]
	3.4 [1, 3, 6, 8–9, 13–15) 3.5 [8, 10]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8–10] 4 [2–9]

Mr. Hall wanted his students to be able to recognize and identify the features of tall tales and the importance of exaggeration to this genre by recalling and retelling examples from tales they had read.

Mr. Hall's third-grade class was seated on the carpet in the listening area. Displayed on a table were selections such as *Pecos Bill*, *Paul Bunyan*, *Sally Ann Thunder and Whirlwind Crockett*, and *American Tall Tales.* There was also a listening center with recordings and tapes. Mr. Hall began the lesson by asking students whether they recognized any of the books or other materials on the table. Several students said they did, and he asked, "What do you know about th

"The characters are not real," said C

"They lived a long time ago," said Luiz.

"They're always bragging," offered Ussuri.

Mr. Hall then asked students to take a minute to write in their learning logs everything they know about "these kinds of stories that we call *tall tales.*" He reminded them that their ideas might come from something they read, saw, or heard. After a few minutes, he asked students to stop writing and share their ideas with a partner. Then he introduced *Johnny Appleseed*, a tall tale adapted by Steven Kellogg, and invited students to listen for any features in this story that are like the features for tall tales they mentioned in their learning logs.

When he finished reading, Mr. Hall said to the class, "Ussuri told us that these stories have bragging in them. Did you hear any bragging in *Johnny Appleseed?*" Several students volunteered that nobody could plant that many apple trees in so many places. Mr. Hall said, "That's probably true. So there does seem to be some sort of bragging in this story. Does anyone know another word for *bragging?*"

Nicha said, "Isn't this called *exaggeration?*"

Mr. Hall responded, "That is a good word." Then he wrote it on chart paper. Next, he wrote, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!" and asked, "Can anyone tell me what they think this statement means?" Several students shared their ideas. Mr. Hall explained that this is an example of exaggeration that people use every day. "Can anyone give other examples of exaggeration?"

Focus

Rich classroom environments contribute to the development of literacy.

By organizing a literacy curriculum around literary genres, teachers provide a context for students to learn about the various types of literature and the characteristics of each.

Vocabulary and concept development are promoted through discussion.

Chris volunteered, "Yeah, my big brother says I exaggerate when I tell him about all the hits I got in my baseball games."

"Good example, Chris," Mr. Hall said. "Can any of you think of more examples in the tall tale you just heard? Think about what was exaggerated in *Johnny Appleseed*." As students shared details from the story that supported their answers, Mr. Hall listed the examples on the chart paper. He then asked, "Why do you think the writer has chosen to use exaggeration?" Some students said it made the story funny and more interesting to read.

Understanding author's purpose contributes to literacy development.

"Now we are going to get into groups to read other tall tales to see whether they also make use of exaggeration. Each group will select a tall tale to read and will prepare a retelling to share with the class. You may choose to use a story map to help you keep track of the details while you are reading. Your retelling should include such story elements as plot, character, and setting, as well as examples of exaggeration in the story. We will add these examples to the list we have just started."

Opportunities for self-selected reading increases motivation.

Critical thinking is developed when children are encouraged to move beyond the analysis of single texts and to explore literary, linguistic, and artistic connections among multiple texts.

The next day, groups read their selected stories and practiced their retellings for presentation to the class. Mr. Hall and the class discussed similarities and differences among the tall tales. He then engaged the class in a discussion of situations in which exaggeration might be used today.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate retellings for accuracy and inclusion of all story elements.

2. Have students self-assess by completing the following sentence stems in their learning logs.

> The tall tale I enjoyed most was_____.
>
> Something I learned from reading the tall tale was_____.
>
> One thing I can do better as a reader is_____.

3. Assess students' understanding of exaggeration by having each student finish several open-ended statements as an exaggeration. For example:

> I was so tired this morning I could have _____.
>
> The cafeteria food is so_____.
>
> My father is so_____.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could use of performance or visual arts enhance the students' appreciation and understanding of tall tales?

2. How could the strategies used in this lesson on tall tales be used with other literary genres?

3. How else could the teacher elaborate on the concept of exaggeration?

Extension Activities:

1. In their journals, students write about a time they exaggerated and describe the consequences.

2. The teacher and children create a bulletin board with a map of the United States. On it, they locate and label the settings of the tall tales read.

3. Students create a Venn diagram to compare two tall-tale heroes they have read about, or they compare two versions of the same tall tale. How do they compare? Which did they like better and why?

4. Students learn and sing some folk songs, e.g., "John Henry."

Developing Critical Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills through a Study of Endangered Animals
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 6-9, 12-13] 3.2 [1-3, 5-7, 9] 3.3 [1, 6-8, 10-13] 3.4 [1, 8, 12, 16] 3.5 [1, 5, 7-9, 12-13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8-13] 4 [1-3, 9-10]

Students in Mrs. Schmitz's class were studying two of Earth's most fragile environments: the Antarctic region and tropical rain forests. The class became interested in further exploring the environment's effects on animal species, particularly endangered species, and adaptability. Students were in the process of researching a chosen endangered animal species for an oral report due the following week. In this lesson, the students apply their acquired knowledge about environmental impacts on animal species to imaginary species.

First, Mrs. Schmitz gathered her students around her on the floor and asked them to reflect upon what they had learned about their chosen endangered species and to share the reasons why this species became endangered. As students discussed what they had learned, Mrs. Schmitz mapped these ideas on the easel. The map helped students to see patterns and similarities in the causes.

The teacher explained to the class that they would be working in cooperative groups to draw conclusions about what they had been learning and then in pairs to complete a writing and drawing activity to demonstrate their knowledge. Before assigning students to heterogeneous cooperative groups, the teacher asked students to review their class-generated list of rules for working together in cooperative learning groups. The teacher then assigned students to groups of four and asked each group to discuss and select the most important factors contributing to an animal's endangerment. As group discussions began, the teacher briefly visited each group, listening to ideas and probing students' reasoning. After a short time, each group presented its ideas, which were listed on the easel.

Mrs. Schmitz then explained to the class that next they would be hypothesizing about the vulnerability of some imaginary creatures. Each cooperative group of four students was handed an information sheet with descriptions of six imaginary animals and their individual characteristics. The groups' task was to decide which creature was most endangered and to give reasons for their conclusions. Some children became very animated, presenting their opinions quite persuasively. Others patiently awaited their turns, giving their reasons in a calm and matter-of-fact tone. Group members, however, listened to each other because they realized their group must reach consensus and develop a

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Learning opportunities can be extended when teachers capitalize on students' interests.

Focus

Higher-order thinking is developed when students explore cause-and-effect relationships and draw conclusions.

Cooperative grouping is more successful when students and teachers set parameters for working to accomplish a task.

Probative questioning facilitates critical listening and logical thinking.

Engaging in hypothesizing and speculation facilitates development of higher-order thinking skills.

Logical thinking is developed when students must provide sound reasons for their opinions.

rationale for their opinion. Mrs. Schmitz touched base with each group during this time, asking key questions to assess progress, guiding discussions, and helping students to solve problems and reach consensus.

After several minutes of group discussion, each group presented its opinion and rationale to the class. As it turned out, most groups had concluded that the same creature had many more risk factors than the other five. Students realized that the more risk factors an animal has, the more vulnerable it is to endangerment. The class then rated the imaginary creatures from most to the least vulnerable.

"Now that you are all experts on endangered species and their risk factors," Mrs. Schmitz told the class, "you are going to pair off to create your own imaginary creature. Your creature will have to show characteristics of either a highly vulnerable, somewhat vulnerable, or adaptable animal."

Students demonstrate their understanding of a concept when they apply it in a new context.

Mrs. Schmitz then gave the students the rest of their instructions. They had to complete five tasks: provide a name for the creature; develop a list of its characteristics; determine its vulnerability rating; draw a picture of the creature in its habitat and show some of its risk factors; and write a descriptive paragraph. She told them to proceed in any order they wished.

The teacher identifies the necessary tasks but allows flexibility in the ways students accomplish them to provide for students' diverse learning styles.

As a culminating activity, students orally shared their creature descriptions and drawings, without divulging their animal's vulnerability rating. Using the student-generated risk-factor chart, the other class members tried to deduce the vulnerability rating of each creature. At the end of this lesson, Mrs. Schmitz asked students to reflect on the new knowledge they had gained from this exercise and to apply that knowledge as they continued working on their research projects.

Students need both teacher validation and self-evaluation to become independent learners.

Recursive learning opportunities strengthen connections between prior and new knowledge.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate descriptive paragraphs for cohesiveness, understanding of concept, and richness of details.

2. Have students determine the vulnerability rating for each creature presented and write a rationale for the rating.

3. Evaluate cooperative group opinions and paired presentations.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does student participation vary depending on the size of the group (whole class, small group, or pair)? How can the teacher encourage each student to be an active participant?

2. How could videos, CD-ROMs, and the Internet be incorporated into this lesson?

3. How does ongoing assessment influence teacher behavior in this lesson?

4. What information concerning student learning is available from the modes (speaking, listening, reading, writing, and drawing) used in this lesson?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students assemble creations into a class book to be shared with other classes and/or parents.

2. Encourage students to create stories or poems based on their creatures.

3. Invite students to investigate some of the causes of harmful environmental conditions.

Resources:

The Needham Science Center. (March, 1993). Vanishing species. Learning, 53—58.

Endangered species: We're all in this together! (1992). National Wildlife Week Educator's Guide, 6—7.

Developing Critical Reading and Notetaking Skills through Researching a Famous African American
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 3, 6–9, 12–13] 3.2 [3, 5–8] 3.3 [1, 6–7, 12–13] 3.4 [1, 6, 8–10, 12, 20] 3.5 [1, 5–6, 12–13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1–2, 8, 10, 13–14] 4 [2–3, 6, 9–10]

Mr. Klein's class had spent two weeks reading and studying about the life and times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as delving into the history of African Americans in the United States. The students were now ready to do further research on a famous African American of their choice. Through this research, they would learn how to critically read a given resource for information, how to take notes, and how to transcribe those notes into their own words. They would be working in pairs to read a biographical article, identify why this person is remembered, and locate five or six important facts about this person's life, including his or her accomplishments. Each pair would then be responsible for making a jigsaw puzzle out of this information, including one important fact on each puzzle piece. One piece would also be designated as a "picture piece" and would include either a drawing of the person, symbols representing that person, or both. An oral sharing and class assembly of the puzzles would conclude the experience.

Mr. Klein's classroom was filled with books, articles, posters, pictures, and magazines with information on famous African Americans. Copies of books, poems, and artwork by famous Black Americans were displayed. Student pairs chose an African American to research. Mr. Klein supplied each pair of students with copies of an article about the pair's chosen person, but students were asked to put their articles aside until they had reviewed critical reading and notetaking procedures.

Next came a lesson on locating important information and notetaking. Through a reading/writing think-aloud, Mr. Klein demonstrated for students how to locate main ideas and important facts in an article. A copy of a biographical article on Wilma Rudolph was reproduced on a transparency for the class to view. Mr. Klein began, "I want to find out what Wilma Rudolph's main accomplishments were and important facts that led up to and supported those accomplishments. Let me think about the best way to begin. I'll first read through the entire article to get a general understanding of Wilma Rudolph's life. Then, I'll go back to pick out important information." After reading the short article aloud to his students, Mr. Klein went back to the beginning, rereading and commenting on his thoughts and feelings as he went along. He continued, "I can't imagine the difficulties Wilma faced as a child, being stricken with polio and unable to walk. Wilma must have been very determined to be able to overcome that handicap. I wonder if having polio made her determination to walk and run

Focus

Plentiful resources promote student engagement in research.

Teacher modeling of critical reading and thinking skills shows students how to think and attend to important information while reading.

even stronger?" Mr. Klein highlighted the sentences on the transparency. In the margin, he drew an arrow and wrote, "Shows strong will and determination."

Students were next asked to participate in a shared reading/writing think-aloud procedure. As students volunteered what they thought was important, Mr. Klein highlighted text and wrote their suggested notations in the margins. By asking for student input, highlighting important information, and making notations, the teacher was demonstrating and involving the students in critical-reading, thinking, and notetaking skills.

While continuing to model, the teacher gradually shifts responsibility for learning to the students.

Once the class had agreed on the subject's main accomplishments and important details, Mr. Klein focused on putting the information in the students' own words on note cards. Again, he used a shared approach. Pointing to the first highlighted piece of information and the "determination" notation written beside it, Mr. Klein wondered aloud how to word that information. With students' input and revisions, the class agreed on the following sentences: "As a child, this famous athlete suffered from polio, a serious and crippling disease. She was very determined to walk without having to wear her leg brace. She worked very hard at it and soon was walking and running without her brace." Mr. Klein recorded these sentences on a piece of chart paper designed to replicate a note card. The class then worked together to complete the notetaking and rewriting task on successive pieces of chart paper until they completed enough sentences for a puzzle. The children now felt confident and ready to work in pairs on their own articles.

The teacher's model encourages students to summarize information in their own words rather than copy from texts.

The pairs of students read their articles and discussed what information to include on note cards. As Mr. Klein walked around the room, he was able to observe the students following his example of highlighting and writing notations. This allowed him to see at a glance students who were proficient at locating important information and those who might need extra guidance. The class continued to put their highlighted information into their own words on note cards.

Pairing students allows them to work independently while being supported by the feedback of a peer.

Once each pair had completed note cards and Mr. Klein had approved them, students wrote their information on the construction paper that would be used for the puzzles. Students created jigsaw puzzles with five pieces of important information and the artwork.

When all puzzles were completed, students presented their information and artwork to the class. Classmates listened, knowing that their next task would require them to retrieve this information. Following the presentations, the pairs cut their sheets into puzzles pieces. Finally, the teacher scrambled the puzzle pieces from three sets, put the students into groups, and gave each group three scrambled puzzles to piece together. Mr. Klein moved among the groups, noting how students discussed the facts and reinforced each other's learning. When the puzzles were reassembled, the students mounted and displayed them in the hallway.

When students know they will have to use information, they will listen attentively to comprehend.

Multimodal activities enhance student learning and tap into different learning styles.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate completed puzzles for quality and clarity of information.

2. Use a rubric for teacher observation of students' understanding and application of critical reading.

3. Direct students to choose three of the African Americans presented in class and write a sentence telling why each is famous.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How might this shared reading/writing think-aloud be used for teaching other skills?

2. How would the outcome have changed if the teacher had merely passed out the articles and asked students to read and summarize the main ideas?

3. What proportion of instructional activities should address diverse learning styles?

Extension Activities:

1. Pairs of students locate and read a second article on their chosen figures in order to discover two new facts to share with the class.

2. Pairs script and perform a dramatic scene from the life of their chosen figures.

3. During the balance of the year, students practice their critical-reading and summarization skills using newspapers and magazine articles about New Jersey. They share their findings with the class during a weekly "New Jersey News" segment.

Resources:

Hudson, Wade, and Wilson Wesley, Valerie. (1988). Book of Black heroes from a to z. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Clemmons, Joan, and Laase, Lois. (1995). Language arts mini-lessons: Step-by-step skill-builders for your classroom. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Phonics in Context
Primary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 5, 7, 9, 13] 3.2 [2-4, 6-7] 3.3 [4]
	3.4 [2, 7, 9] 3.5 [5, 7]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 9, 13] 4 [10]

Mrs. Hernandez, a first-grade teacher, read regularly to her children to broaden their opportunities for literature and to provide an adult role model for reading. On occasion she used texts as a springboard for teaching about language skills, such as a lesson on spelling patterns. In this case, she used the literature to teach a phonics lesson.

Focus

The teacher's first goal is to ensure that students enjoy literature.

Mrs. Hernandez was reading Nancy Shaw's *Sheep in a Jeep*, which begins:

> *Beep! Beep!*
> *Sheep in a jeep on a hill that's steep.*
> *Uh-oh! The jeep won't go.*
> *Sheep leap to push the jeep.*

During the first reading, students giggled at the silly antics of the sheep as depicted in the pictures and the story itself. After she finished reading, the students talked about the funny parts and asked her to read it again.

As she read it through a second and third time, the students began to chant parts of the text, most often on the words *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep*. Then, Mrs. Hernandez closed the book.

Young students enjoy pattern books with rhyming words, and predictable texts provide opportunity for direct instruction in phonics.

"Wow!" she said. "You are beginning to read this book very quickly. What helps you read this story?"

Kareem replied, "That's easy. The pictures tell the story."

Mrs. Hernandez said, "Using the pictures is one good way, but we've learned to use other kinds of clues on the page too. Can anyone tell me another way to learn the words?"

The teacher acknowledges all the methods used to construct meaning from the text to reinforce use of multiple reading strategies.

Sara said, "I just remembered the words you said."

"That's a good way," said the teacher. "Did you remember all of the words?"

"I remembered some of the words," said Alysha. "I remembered *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep*."

Students can draw on prior knowledge for understanding new phonics principles.

Mrs. Hernandez listed the words *beep*, *sheep*, and *jeep* in blue marker on chart paper so that the *e-e-p* at the end of each word lined up vertically.

"It's word detective time. Do you see anything that is the same in these words?" asked Mrs. Hernandez. "Write on your chalkboards

Because of developmental differences, some students will recognize only the final consonant sound while others will recognize the entire phonogram.

what letters these words share. Show your letters to your reading partner. If you have the same letters, then hold your chalkboard in the air." Some students noticed that all of the words ended with the letter *p*; others noticed that all of the words ended with the letters *e-e-p*. Students also said that the words rhymed.

After they shared these observations, Mrs. Hernandez asked Julio to come up and use a red marker to underline the *p* in each word. The class then concurred that indeed all the words ended with the same letter. Mrs. Hernandez said each word aloud asking the students to listen to the end of the word. She asked them whether they remembered what sound the letter *p* stood for at the beginning of many words they had in their word books, a notebook where each student recorded word patterns. After the students identified the *p* sound, she asked the children whether the letter *p* made the same sound at the end of the word. The students agreed that the *p* sound is the same at the beginning and end of the word.

Understanding of sound/symbol relationships is developed through instruction and visual displays.

Sam then came to the easel and used the green marker to underline the *e-e-p* in each word. The students recognized that pattern. Mrs. Hernandez and the class again pronounced each word, and again the class agreed the words shared the same rhyming pattern. Then the class went through the book looking for words that ended in *e-e-p*. They found *steep*, *deep*, *weep*. These words were added to the list.

Sound phonics instruction includes development of active listening skills.

Avi pointed out that *leap* has the same sound as *sheep*, which led the other children to find the words *leap*, and *heap*, and *cheap.* Mrs. Hernandez began a second list pattern on the chart paper and then asked the children how the two lists differed. They noticed the variations in spelling the *eep* sound and concluded that *e-e-p* and *e-a-p* could stand for the same sound. Mrs. Hernandez reminded the students that rhyming words often share the same spelling pattern, but sometimes the same sound can be made with another combination of letters. The students wrote the words in two columns on the same page of their word books. Finally, the class read *Sheep in a Jeep* again with all of the students saying the *eep* and *eap* words.

Possible Assessments:

1. Evaluate student participation in the shared reading.

2. Assess student performance in the peer activity and during review of the spelling pattern.

3. Listen for the students' correct recognition of words that end in eep or eap during reading conference.

4. Look for the use of these words in the students' writing.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why is the teacher's first goal to ensure that students enjoy literature? What would happen if the teacher used every literary experience as the basis for a phonics lesson?

2. Why does the teacher reinforce multiple reading strategies?

3. What other phonics skills did the students need to pronounce the different skills?

4. Why is this a particularly good book for a phonics lesson?

Extension Activities:

1. Students might read Nancy Shaw's other sheep adventures with intricate rhyming schemes: Sheep in a Shop, Sheep on a Ship, Sheep out to Eat, and Sheep Take a Hike.

2. Pairs of students select another rhyming book to prepare and read to the class.

3. The teacher might build upon the students' learning of spelling patterns in this lesson by developing a related vocabulary lesson. Through a word guessing game, students try to identify new words, e.g., keep, creep, weep, deep, steep, and from the text, leap and heap. Students share their experiences.

Using Word Origins to Develop Vocabulary
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 5, 7-8, 12] 3.2 [3-7, 9] 3.3 [4] 3.4 [4, 7, 9] 3.5 [7-8]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-4, 9-14] 4 [2-3, 5, 10]

Word origins, or etymologies, provide interesting information and can contribute to a deeper understanding of words and their meanings. Etymological information may also provide clues that help with spelling particular words. Ms. Maxwell's fourth-grade students used a section of their learning logs for recording interesting information about words, their meanings, their families, and their spellings. These activities extend students' spelling knowledge and vocabulary.

Focus

Students regularly examined in detail words that appeared in their independent reading, teacher read-alouds, and content area reading. For example, as part of a science unit, the class had studied the history and development of medicine and explored the many words associated with it, such as *medic*, *medicine*, *medical*, *medicinal*, and *medication.*

As an introduction to a new language arts unit about the memoir as a genre, Ms. Maxwell wanted students to explore the meaning of the word. She wrote the word *memoir* on an overhead transparency as students recorded the word in their learning logs.

Learning logs serve as a personal written record of learning that students can review periodically.

"Now, who recognizes this word, *memoir*?" asked Ms. Maxwell.

Sandra raised her hand. "It looks like *memory*, but it's not spelled that way."

Allan added, "But *memory* and *memoir* must be related."

Brainstorming helps to facilitate students' discovery of common elements in word families.

"Okay, let's start with *memory* because that's a word you know," said Ms. Maxwell. "Who can define *memory*?"

"*Memory* is the picture you carry around in your mind," said Marta.

"I like that," remarked Jessica. "Pictures help you remember."

Ms. Maxwell wrote the word *remember* on the transparency.

Alan looked at the three words on the board and observed, "They all have the same syllable, *m-e-m*."

"Okay, that's a good observation. Let's think of other words that have that syllable," the teacher said.

The teacher defers use of the dictionary to allow students to expand their vocabulary before being confined to a single definition.

Eileen wondered whether *memorize* was right. Matt suggested *remembrance*; Luz said *member*; Anuj offered *memorial*; and Ashley provided the word *membrane*. Ms. Maxwell recorded the words in a list under the word *memoir.*

"Now," she said to the students, "look at this list of words and see whether any of them have something in common with the word *memory*."

"A few seem to be about going back in time," concluded Tony.

"Which ones?" asked Ms. Maxwell.

Tony suggested *memorize*, *remembrance*, and *memorial*.

"Good, Tony. So, class, what do you think a *memoir* must be?"

Jill predicted, "You said we would be reading and writing memoirs so it must be a written memory."

Jennifer suggested that the class agree to define *memoir* as "a story that an author writes from a memory she or he has."

Vondre suggested expanding the definition to include "experience and memory."

Ms. Maxwell said, "Why don't we compare our definition with the dictionary definition. Who will do that for us?...All right, Juan, check the dictionary." While checking the dictionary to see how the class's definition compared, Juan recorded the word's origin, or etymology, on the board. He then explained, "*Memoir* comes from a French word, *memoire*, meaning 'memory'."

The dictionary serves to confirm what the children have already discovered and to expand their understanding of the word.

"Let's look again at the list of words we wrote under the word *memoir* on the board. If we're going to leave only the words that have to do with *memory*, which words should I remove?"

Through inductive teaching, the teacher allows students to modify original contributions.

Volunteers suggested that *membrane* and *member* be deleted. Ms. Maxwell said, "Good. That's correct."

Jonathan asked, "If *member* doesn't belong, then why does *remember* belong on the list?"

Student response is used to guide future instructional planning.

Ms. Maxwell responded, "That's a really good question. The word origins are different, and we can research later to explore the differences."

After this discussion, Ms. Maxwell reminded students to copy all the words left on the list and related information in their learning logs. They wrote down information about the word *memoir*; its meaning, its word family, and its spelling. Ms. Maxwell concluded the discussion by asking her students to think about how knowing the origin of *memoir* might help them to develop a richer understanding of the text they would be reading and writing. For homework, Ms. Maxwell assigned her students the task of looking up the word *memento* and bringing one memento to share with the class the next day.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor writing for correct use of word families recorded in their learning logs.

2. Ask students to introduce a word from a "mystery" (new or unfamiliar) word family and lead the class in a brainstorming session to discover the word's relatives and common meaning. Observe students' use of strategies to examine and incorporate new vocabulary.

3. Direct students to write an entry in their learning logs reflecting on how their initial understanding of memoir has changed as a result of their reading and writing experiences. Assess student reflections.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does discussing and examining the etymology of words contribute to students' understanding of and interest in words? To their spelling of words?

2. How does this strategy for vocabulary development compare to other strategies for vocabulary development?

3. What other functions can the learning log serve in the classroom?

Extension Activities:

1. Divide students into groups and assign each group a different region to investigate for that region's contributions to English (e.g., Celtic: glamour; Persian: bazaar; Indian: madras).

2. Discuss with students eponyms—words that enter our language directly from names or places. (Two examples: Levi Strauss was a clothing manufacturer who made strong, long-lasting pants of heavy blue cloth. These pants are now called "levis." The Earl of Sandwich, a nobleman, was the first person to put a piece of meat between two pieces of bread and eat it for dinner. Today, people still like to eat "sandwiches.") Make a list of interesting and widely used eponyms to hang in the classroom.

3. Students review all of their learning log entries for word families to identify five favorites and then discuss the reasons for their choices. Monitor students' discussion for clarity of reasoning.

Resources:

Ashton, C. (1988). Words can tell: A book about our language. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Simon & Schuster.

Klausner, J. (1990). Talk about English: How words travel and change. New York: Crowell.

Terbann, M. (1988). Guppies in tuxedos: Funny eponyms. New York: Clarion.

Writing Conference
Upper Elementary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [4, 6-7, 12] 3.2 [3, 5, 7-8, 12]
	3.3 [2, 4-5, 7, 9-12, 15] 3.4 [4] 3.5 [7]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 8, 10, 13, 15] 4 [1, 3, 9]

Mrs. Turso's third-grade class was involved in a writing work-shop. Her students were at various stages in their writings. Several were writing first drafts, expanding ideas they had previously listed in the back pages of their journals. Two students were helping a third student edit her revised draft. Mrs. Turso was circulating among her student classroom, talking to students briefly and making notes of their progress. Later she would transfer these notes to a binder where she kept a record for each child. Most of these writing conferences lasted only a minute, with Mrs. Turso asking a specific question based on the student text or making suggestions in response to a student's question.

Focus

As she moved about the room, Mrs. Turso noticed that Brian seemed stuck, unable or unwilling to revise his first draft. He sat staring at his paper tapping his pencil on the desk. She moved an empty student chair next to Brian's in order to hold a longer conference with him about his writing.

Physical behaviors may signal teachers of students' needs for intervention or capacity to work autonomously.

"You've got a really good idea in writing about your piano lessons, Brian. I like the way you describe your teacher's frown, especially the phrase '*scrunching up her eyebrows*'."

"She's always frowning."

"I can see that from the first page. What else does she do?"

Students respond more meaningfully to open-ended questions when they are based on the students' texts.

"Sometimes she reminds me about the way I'm sitting or how I'm holding my hands above the keyboard."

"What songs are you learning to play?"

Teacher coaching enables students to rehearse ideas orally before writing.

"I have to do that Mozart one, the one that sounds like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." That's at one piano. Then she claps real loud, and I have to run to the other piano to play 'Doe, a deer'."

"She makes you run from one piano to the other?"

Brian laughed. "Yup. She says it's good for my posture and my concentration. I think it's weird."

"Don't you think readers would be interested in that part of your story? Remember when Larry wrote about the soccer drills, where the team members had to run backwards between the cones? When he read that part, you laughed. Don't you think your experience is just as interesting?"

By tapping previous literacy experiences, teachers enable students to recognize and value their own ideas.

"I don't know. Maybe."

"Well, why don't you add some of the details you've just described to me. If you need more space, do what I did in last week's mini-lesson. Take a second piece of paper, add the details, and use a star to show where you want to insert the new information. You can use an asterisk—remember, that's what we call a star. You can put the asterisk at the end of this paragraph. Then you can put another one on this sheet where you can write about running from piano to piano. When you finish the new section, you can share it with your group and see what they say. Later, if you like, you can arrange the parts in better order on the computer."

Mrs. Turso moved the chair back where it had been, jotted a quick note about Brian's writing, and moved on. Later, while inserting her note in the binder, she noticed that earlier notes indicated that Brian consistently had difficulty providing enough context for outside readers. Now, however, when she looked up, Brian was busy writing on the new sheet of paper. Though he usually avoided expanding his text, Brian seemed to like the humor that the oral retelling of his experience had engendered. That was enough motivation for him to work further on his piano story. Mrs. Turso made another note, "Encourage humor in Brian's stories," and moved back to confer with another student.

Third graders require direct instruction in revision and repeated guidance in the cognitive and physical demands of the task.

Ongoing teacher observation and assessment provide essential information that guides effective teaching and learning.

Possible Assessments:

1. Review observational records periodically to monitor students' progress.

2. Use the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric to evaluate students' texts.

3. Have students share texts in peer response groups and identify an effective feature of each student's writing.
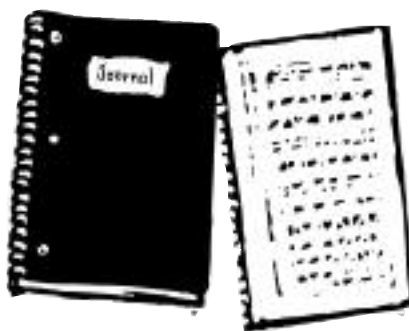
Questions for Reflection:

1. Why did the teacher choose to go to the student's desk rather than have the student come to hers?

2. What are some of the things this teacher did to promote effective student writing?

3. What features of this lesson foster critical thinking and independent learning?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students illustrate a scene from their stories.

2. With peer input, students select their favorite pieces for inclusion in a class literary magazine.

3. After a demonstration lesson on webbing or mapping, students select an idea from their journals to web or map as prewriting activity.

Short Story and Film: **Cross-Grade Collaborations**
Elementary/Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 6-8, 12-13] 3.2 [1-3, 5-7] 3.3 [1-4, 7, 10-12, 18] 3.4 [1-2, 7, 9, 12-14] 3.5 [1-2, 6-7, 10-11, 13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-4, 8] 4 [1-3, 10]

Ms. Mellody, first-grade teacher, and Mr. Devereaux, eleventh- and twelfth-grade World Literature teacher, decided to have their students work concurrently on multifaceted projects concerning *The Secret of Roan Inish*, the Celtic-based short story and the film that writer/director John Sayles adapted from it. These projects would culminate in a sharing of the projects at the high school.

Mr. Devereaux visited the elementary classroom to introduce *The Secret of Roan Inish* and begin the oral reading of the story. Before beginning to read, he asked the students to think about favorite relatives they liked to see. At the end of the introductory reading, the children responded in a chain of associations—some more appropriate than others—linking the story to their own experiences:

"I visit my grandmother in Florida, and we go to the beach together."

"My family goes to the shore in the summer."

"My brother lives with my father. I miss him."

Since the children would be asked to keep reading logs throughout their school careers, Ms. Mellody and Mr. Devereaux gave the first graders the opportunity to make picture and/or word records as part of their reactions to what they had heard during the reading. These pictures/word records would become the basis for the children's end-of-project chap books and a class banner.

Both the elementary and secondary students shared the same set of texts, the high schoolers reading the text aloud on their own, the elementary students having the text read aloud to them by their teacher and also taking the text home for parental reading and reinforcement. In both cases, the teachers wanted to approximate the tradition of oral storytelling for the students by having them hear the story as it was read aloud.

The World Literature students discussed the universal thematic components of the story: the search for a lost home and family and the interaction of the human and natural worlds. Having already met the high-level challenges of *King Lear* and *Ran*, the Japanese film adaptation of the Shakespearean play, the World Literature students recognized the archetypal components of *The Secret of Roan Inish.*

"Reunion with a separated family member—that's one thing they both have in common," offered one student.

Focus

Cross-age collaboration provides authentic audiences for communications at both levels.

For primary-grade students, oral reading allows access to texts too difficult for their independent reading and provides models of good literary language.

For secondary students, the opportunity to read aloud on their own connects them to the oral language tradition.

"If you subtract the passage of time and the advance of technology, you can see that all these stories are myths," commented another.

"Shakespeare lived only a few hundred miles away from the islands in the story," remarked one particularly geographically astute student.

"Yeah, and if you believe James Tyrone, Sr., Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic anyway," countered the resident class wit/wise guy.

The first-grade children worked on their reading logs both in the classroom and at home since parents and other family members shared the reading responsibilities with the classroom teacher. Each child then created his or her own brochure or chap book based on his or her reading log responses to the story, allowing for individual expression and interpretation. The students also created a group banner illustrating the characters and events in the story, working together with Ms. Mellody and with their art teacher.

Parental involvement reinforces the home-school connection and should be promoted at every opportunity.

The elementary school children were the guests of the high school students at a communal celebration featuring the first graders' banner and chap books, a viewing of the film, and a buffet of ethnic and American food, prepared by Mr. Devereaux and his students. Invitations to individual first graders were answered with thank-you notes drawn or written by the first graders. Then, during the celebration, the high schoolers read the first graders' chap books and wrote back to them on a sheet of paper attached for these messages.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor students' use of their reading logs to record reactions to the oral reading of the text.

2. Evaluate students' ability to work cooperatively in groups to create the class banner.

3. Assess the first graders' understanding of the story based on their chap books.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could this activity be modified for use with literature of other cultures?

2. How can skill building be incorporated into the project?

3. What other kinds of activities lend themselves to cross-grade collaboration?

Extension Activities:

1. The teachers can videotape the viewing/celebratory session for later discussion with each of the classes.

2. Guest speakers, including family members or friends of the students, or members of the community, can be invited to talk about their previous homes in this or other countries.

3. Librarians and other media specialists can be invited to offer their input as to possible choices of material from other cultures and to serve as resource persons for student research in children's ethnic literature, film, and music.

4. Students can write their own myths and share them with another age group, using storytelling techniques.

Thematic Unit: **Create a Display Advertisement**
                                          Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [14-16] 3.2 [5, 8] 3.3 [7, 12, 15]
	3.4 [19-20, 23-24] 3.5 [8, 11-13, 15]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1, 3] 3 [1-3, 7-8, 10-11, 14-15] 4 [1-3, 5, 7, 9]

In response to a selection of literature entitled *The Smallest Dragonboy* by Anne McCaffrey, eighth-grade students created an advertisement for a dragonrider. To complete this task, students analyzed elements of display ads and synthesized information from the story in order to identify the qualities a successful dragonrider would need. They then composed an appropriate display ad reflecting these qualities.

Focus

The class began with a study of display advertisements brought in by their teacher, Ms. Diaz. She told the class, "We will be studying display ads in preparation for creating your own ad for a dragonrider." Ms. Diaz used an overhead transparency with three examples of display ads that incorporated common features such as illustrations, brief language, and buzz words. The class identified these devices. Then Ms. Diaz distributed new examples of display ads for group analysis. She told the class, "In your groups, consider how the words, phrases, and pictures affect you. Ask yourself: 'How are these advertisements designed? Are they successful?' Remember to have one student in each group record the findings. You'll have fifteen minutes."

A model facilitates an understanding of the task.

Guidelines and time limits help students stay on task.

Working in cooperative learning groups of four or five, the students identified the common elements of language and purpose of the ads given to their group. During this time, the teacher circulated, interacting with the students, making sure that all were working, and guiding them toward particular choices. Included in these group visits were discussions of word choice and phraseology. After fifteen minutes, Ms. Diaz reassembled the class, and the "reporters" shared their group's findings, which she wrote on chart paper. Then other members of the class added comments.

Group work fosters greater individual participation than whole-class instruction. The teacher needs to be accessible during activity to guide instruction and monitor learning.

"In this ad, the picture attracts my attention because it's colorful, and the people look like they're having fun," offered Carlos, a group reporter.

"Yeah, and look at all the sports you can play in this gym," added Marta.

"This ad uses short, catchy phrases like, *Work Less, Earn More*," Jerod stated.

"Did anyone notice anything about spacing?" questioned Ms. Diaz.

"Well," began Sarah, "the illustration in this ad is in the middle, with the buzzwords below it, in large, dark letters."

"So, let me see if I understand. In your analysis you were able to see the importance of the components of display advertisements. The intent of the ads is to focus your attention," concluded Ms. Diaz.

"Yeah," replied Jon, "the illustration draws you in, and the buzzwords not only catch attention, they make you think."

"Now you are going to use what you've learned to create your own display advertisement for a dragonrider. I want you to consider what qualities a successful dragonrider would need. Think about the story and what you learned. In your groups, brainstorm a list of qualities you consider to be most important for a dragonrider. At the end of ten minutes, I'm going to want to see a list of your top five qualities. Use chart paper to record the qualities so that we can see one another's listing."

After they returned to their small groups, students worked together to first brainstorm qualities and then select the five qualities of a successful dragonrider. A representative from each group listed these qualities on chart paper. After ten minutes, Ms. Diaz led the students in a discussion of similarities and differences among the groups' findings.

Students were then instructed to pretend that they were dragons from Pern looking for riders. Ms. Diaz asked them to create individual visual advertisements highlighting the qualities that they had cited as most important for a dragonrider. Each advertisement was to exhibit details gleaned from the story. "You'll want to attract a potential dragonrider and convince her or him that s/he wants the job," explained Ms. Diaz. "Consider our conversation about buzzwords, illustrations, and brief language. All might be helpful."

The students began working and were encouraged to use a variety of materials such as markers, magazine cutouts, colored pencils, paints, construction paper, and computer software. Although each student had to create an advertisement, Ms. Diaz encouraged students to help each other. Again, she monitored and assisted while they worked.

After students completed their advertisements, they practiced their presentations with a partner before explaining their works to the class. Each talk was limited to two minutes, after which students rated each other using a rubric they had designed for short presentations.

The teacher guides the discussion by questioning the students so that students can hear each others' ideas and gain new ideas.

Teacher input scaffolds the learning; summaries remind students of salient points.

Clear directions help students to accomplish the task.

Making judgments is an important part of critical thinking.

Brainstorming allows students to contribute their ideas without the risk of criticism.

Students engage in higher-order thinking by comparing responses.

Activities promote student learning when they allow the students to synthesize their knowledge and display it in a new product.

Activities that integrate visual literacy with reading appreciation extend the development of both and give visual learners an opportunity to excel.

Students are encouraged to reflect on what they have done so that they will be more aware of their cognitive process. Varied opportunities to use oral language enhance its development.

Possible Assessments:

1. Have students use a student-designed rubric to rate their peers' oral presentations of ads.

2. Conduct ongoing assessment through observation during collaborative activities.

3. Evaluate students ads in terms of use of illustrations, brief language, buzz-words, and effective display of text and visuals.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How might the students effectively offer suggestions or comments to their peers when the advertisements are orally presented?

2. What is the benefit of first working in cooperative groups and then participating in individual assignments?

3. How does this activity address the needs of gifted learners? students with disabilities?

4. How could videotaping be used effectively in this sequence of activities?

Extension Activities:

1. Students might write compositions in the first person taking the persona of the dragon.

2. Students could create an application to become a dragonrider.

3. Students could create and publish a newspaper from Pern (the setting of the selection) and include classified ads.

Thematic Unit: **Critical Book Review**
                                                                        Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6-7, 12] 3.2 [5, 7- 8] 3.3 [3-4, 7] 3.4 [2, 10-11, 18-23, 25]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 5, 8-10, 12] 4 [1-2, 9]

A sixth-grade class wrote individual book reviews as an outcome of a shared book experience. As part of a unit on Holocaust studies, a sixth-grade class researched race, bigotry, and intolerance. Their investigations led them to study the Civil Rights movement and its participants, including information about church bombings and the victimization of children. During this unit, one student discovered Christopher Paul Curtis' *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*. Because the students were so touched by this topic, and there was only one copy of the book, they asked their teacher, Ms. O'Donnell, to read it to them. Ms. O'Donnell decided to extend the learning to include writing a critical book review of it.

Focus

Students' interest stimulates new inquiry.

Reading aloud fosters literary appreciation. Students need to hear fluent adult reading models.

During the reading, the students had recorded character notes. Then, as a prewriting activity, students had completed a story map to organize their understanding of the book. Now, before the students began to write their reviews, Ms. O'Donnell presented a lesson on the organization and content of book reviews.

Visual organizers facilitate comprehension and organization of ideas for writing.

Ms. O'Donnell first introduced the elements of a critical book review. These included comments about setting, character, genre, plot, mood, and theme, as well as intended audience, author's writing style, and reviewer's opinion. She placed a sample book review of Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected* on an overhead transparency. The teacher and the students worked together to identify the elements of the review. Ms. O'Donnell read the review orally while students followed along with the text. She and the students commented on the reviewer's opening or lead-in, selection of details, use of textual support to strengthen assertions, and effective word choice. Working in pairs, students analyzed a book review of *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White that had been taken from the *New York Times Book Review*. Again, the students worked to identify the elements. At the conclusion of this activity, the children came together to share their ideas and to support their responses.

The gradual release of responsibility, moving from direct demonstration to guided practice with feedback, leads to independent learning.

Justifying responses promotes critical thinking.

For homework, Ms. O'Donnell asked the students to use their notes from her read-aloud to identify elements in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*. These elements included: title and author of the book, setting, character, author's style and use of dialogue, theme, audience, and the reader's opinion of these elements.

After sufficient modeling and guided practice, the homework assignment reinforces the skills students have learned in class.

The next day, Ms. O'Donnell conducted a writing workshop. After reviewing the elements the students had identified, Ms. O'Donnell asked the students to begin their drafts of their book reviews. "Remember, your overall opinion of the story should be evident from the very beginning of your review," reminded Ms. O'Donnell.

"What if I didn't like the story?" asked Alec.

"Then you want to make sure your lead-in conveys your opinion. A strong word with a negative connotation, something like *unrealistic*, will clue your audience to your opinion right away," suggested Ms. O'Donnell.

Acknowledging different responses to the text helps students validate their opinions.

"And don't forget that not only do you need to include the basic elements of a review, such as title, author, setting, plot, and theme, but you will also want to remark on some of the other things we have discussed. You will want to consider the author's use of language to create a meaningful message, convey accurate information, and create a mood," explained Ms. O'Donnell.

"A meaningful message is usually the abstract theme, right?" questioned Sam.

"Yes," remarked Ms. O'Donnell, "and remember we have been studying the Civil Rights movement and issues of race, bigotry, and intolerance. There are many points to the story that you can comment on, using the background you now have."

Students are encouraged to use their prior knowledge.

While the students wrote, Ms. O'Donnell used part of the time to hold individual conferences and to monitor student progress.

The teacher is both facilitator and coach during the writing workshop.

At the end of class, students placed their initial drafts in their writing folders in order to have them available for peer evaluation at the next writing workshop.

Writing is a process that requires revising and editing over an extended period of time.

Possible Assessments:

1. Review character notes and story maps with the students for accuracy and completeness.

2. Assess and note students' understanding of book review elements during teacher-student conferences.

3. Have students exchange first drafts for peer evaluation of content and organization prior to revision.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can the teacher encourage students to use the lesson on writing critical book reviews?

2. How can students' reading experience with the Watsons lead to new reading about a minority's oppression by a majority?

3. How can the teacher use the students' varied reactions to The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 to plan future literacy experiences with the students?

Extension Activities:

1. Pairs of students select two characters from the story The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963, who will write two letters to each other. Through these letters, the characters share their memories and their interpretations of the 1963 events as they recalled them in 1973 and again in 1993. After each pair reads the four letters, the rest of the class discusses the accuracy, the logic of the arguments, and the events of the late 1990s that might change the characters' earlier perspectives.

2. Groups of four or five students select a vivid scene from the text to dramatize for the class. These may be sequential scenes, or they may center on one scene. The audience rates the performance and provides reasons for their assessment.

Thematic Unit: **Comic Strip Creation**
                                                               Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 12-13, 18] 3.2 [5-6, 8-9] 3.3 [3, 6-7, 10, 13] 3.4 [7, 9, 12, 18, 23] 3.5 [7, 10-13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8-11, 15] 4 [1-3, 5]

As part of a classroom reading of the novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor, Mr. Colten used published comic strips to facilitate understanding of conflict and the universality of the conflicts depicted in the novel. His fifth graders began discussing some of the problems encountered by the characters in the story. Teacher-led brainstorming revealed several conflicts among characters: racial issues, family concerns, community questions, and socioeconomic diversity. Some of these problems involved money, jobs, cars, friendships, weather, and school. Issues were noted on chart paper for future reference.

Students had been directed to collect and bring to class the comic page from a daily and a Sunday edition of their local newspaper. Mr. Colten divided the class into cooperative learning groups and directed them to identify and discuss the conflict presented in these humorous situations and to list them.

After students shared their findings with the whole class, Mr. Colten reviewed the elements of a comic strip, including beginning, middle, end; conversation balloons; characters; conflict and resolution (which can be serious, humorous, ironic, or ambiguous). Students made connections between the conflicts they had identified in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and the comic strips they had been reviewing.

Using an overhead transparency, Mr. Colten then modeled the creation of a comic strip. Students volunteered a conflict that had been identified in the novel, and Mr. Colten drew a four-panel comic, illustrating the conflict. While he worked, he shared his thinking process with his students and asked for suggestions on layout design, dialogue, characters, and sequence of panel episodes. At the end of the process, both teacher and students admired their collaborative product.

Students then reassembled into new cooperative learning teams that included at least one student with demonstrated artistic ability for each group. In order to avoid duplication of ideas, Mr. Colten assigned each group a specific conflict that had been identified on the chart paper. Appropriate materials, such as drawing paper, markers, colored pencils, etc., were distributed to the student groups. Students began planning and eventually creating comic strips while Mr. Colten monitored and assisted each group. Upon completing the comic strip, each group orally presented a rationale for choices of dialogue, resolution, and sequence of images to the whole class. Assessment of the comic strips was done by students using a teacher-made rubric.

Focus

Brainstorming allows free generation of ideas without risk of censure, which enables students to generate more ideas than they would in controlled discussion.

By encouraging students to identify similarities between the two types of text, the teacher fosters higher-order thinking.

The teacher not only demonstrates the task but also invites students to participate, which allows gradual release of responsibilities to the students.

Careful teacher preparation involves attention to student dynamics, clear direction, and provision of appropriate materials.

In having to present a rationale, students become more reflective about their decision making.

Possible Assessments:

1. Ask each student to create the first three panels of a four-panel comic strip illustrating a conflict in the novel but leaving the fourth panel blank. Copies of these could be made and distributed for other students to complete.

2. Have students work collaboratively to sequence all completed comic strips so the order reflects the sequence in the novel.

3. Direct students to select a conflict in the novel and write a reflective essay in which they discuss the universality of that conflict based on prior knowledge.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does the cartooning activity promote other language arts literacy activities?

2. How can the comic strip project be implemented across the curriculum?

3. What is the rationale for using apparently playful materials, e.g., comic strips, as a tool for teaching literary concepts?

Extension Activities:

1. Students analyze the published cartoons to see what makes them humorous, ironic, or ambiguous.

2. Students use their skills as comic strip creators to illustrate historical events.

3. Students script and videotape key scenes from the novel to present to other fifth-grade classes.

Focus on Character
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 12-13, 15-16] 3.2 [6-8] 3.3 [7, 11, 17] 3.4 [10-12, 20, 23] 3.5 [8, 10]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 9-10] 4 [2-3]

Members of Mr. Klee's grade 7 language arts class were reading *Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant. To develop the students' ability to analyze literary characters based on technical evidence, Mr. Klee began a lesson including cooperative learning, teacher modeling, and guided practice with a "Do Now" that provided a springboard for the analysis and interpretation of the novel's characters.

Focus

Mr. Klee's class routinely expected a "Do Now" instruction on the board as they arrived in class. Today's instruction told them to take one folded slip of paper from the basket on the desk and respond. Each paper contained one of the following prompts:

The "Do Now" organizes the students for learning and engages them immediately, freeing the teacher to attend to administrative demands.

> Based on your reading of *Missing May* so far, make a quick sketch in your notebook of what you think Summer looks like.

> Based on your reading of *Missing May* so far, make a quick sketch in your notebook of what you think Ob looks like.

> Based on your reading of *Missing May* so far, make a quick sketch in your notebook of what you think Cletus looks like.

> Based on your reading of *Missing May* so far, make a quick sketch in your notebook of what you think May looks like.

For the next five minutes, students worked individually to create a quick sketch of the character they had selected. As they worked, their teacher took attendance and then walked around to observe the class. When the students finished their sketches, Mr. Klee told them, "You will notice that in each of the room's corners is a sign that says: *Summer*, *Cletus*, *Ob*, or *May.* You are going to take your sketch, notebook, a pen, and the novel and go to the corner that names the character you focused upon. When you get there, show one another your drawings and talk about the similarities and differences in your portrayal of the character. In ten minutes I'm going to want to see a chart in which you record what your group sees as characteristics of the character."

Advanced planning facilitates class-room management.

For the next ten minutes, students talked about the character, their drawings, and their early impressions of the novel. Meanwhile, Mr. Klee moved from group to group, providing each with a piece of chart paper, a marking pen, and masking tape and told one member of the group where the chart should

The opportunity to compare findings with those of other students often generates new ideas.

be posted. The teacher wanted to see how students generated data, as well as how they represented their findings.

At the end of the ten minutes, Mr. Klee asked each group to share its conclusions about its character by reading from its chart. Some discussion ensued as members of the class agreed or disagreed with a group's description. Mr. Klee offered no comment at this point, preferring to wait until he introduced the concept of textual support and interpretation.
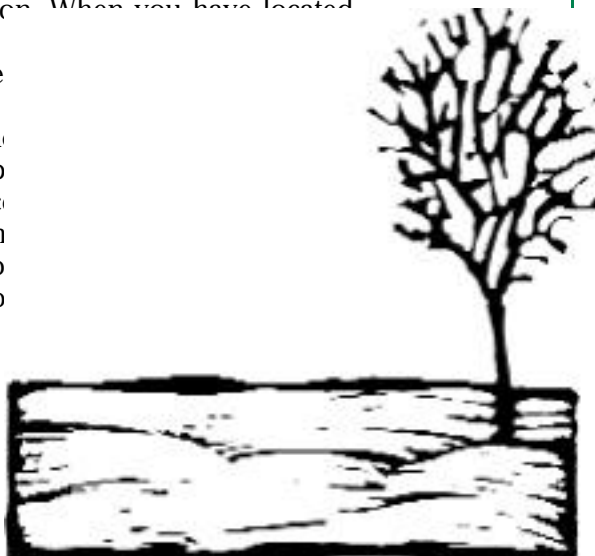
The teacher withholds comments to encourage students to come to their own conclusions.

The teacher switched on the overhead and illuminated the following transparency:

Character Description and/or Trait	Textual Support	Explanation

By using an overhead transparency, the teacher is able to face the class and monitor student reactions while modeling.

The teacher then asked the class to consider how the chart might help them to organize their initial comments about the characters. Students offered several ideas although all seemed unable to say what "textual support" meant. "Let's use this chart and record what Jess and Peter told us about Summer," the teacher said. Mr. Klee had Charlie paraphrase the descriptor that Jess and Peter first offered and added that student's wording in the column labeled *Character Description*. As the teacher received information, he showed the class how to use the novel to support student assertions.

"Now, Charlie told us that Summer is fragile because the winter months are particularly isolating. I want you to work with the person next to you and find the exact section of the novel where we learn this information. When you have located that section, raise your ferred with one anothe

By breaking the task into manageable segments, the teacher ensures that students master the task step-by-step.

"Okay, Angel, tell us th are on. Now read the p the chart. You should c told his students. As An recorded the informatio recorded the informatio notebooks on a similar

"Notice how I recorded this information on the chart," Mr. Klee told the students, pointing to quotation marks and the use of the page reference. "When you cite direct sections from the novel, I'll want you to use the same format. I put the information in the column called *Textual Support* because it is direct evidence from the novel. Sometimes textual support will be a single direct quote from the novel. Other times, several actions or events will lead you to form an opinion about a character. But in each case you need to go back to the text for evidence to back up your opinion."

Then Mr. Klee moved to the third column, *Explanation.* "Now we have moved to the most interesting part because it allows us to give reasons why text supports our conclusion. In the column headed by *Explanation*, please explain why this section of text supports the assertion that Summer is fragile. Or if you disagree, give your reason. When you are done, show two other people. If you find someone else has written something you like, quote them in your notebook and give that person's name." Mr. Klee moved around the room as pairs or trios discussed their reasons. After five minutes, he called for some explanations.

"Summer's fragile quality shows because she notices how much lonelier it is in the winter. She notices this because May has died and she is scared," Leo read.

After calling on other students, Mr. Klee concluded the guided practice by directing students to work in pairs and continue the analysis of two additional characters. Students worked for the remainder of the class time on this task, recording their work in notebooks. Mr. Klee monitored their work by moving among the groups and recording which students were successfully completing the task and which ones needed help. The next day the teacher planned to use the students' initial work to introduce direct and indirect methods of characterization, as well as to have students make plot predictions based on their knowledge of the characters.

The teacher introduces the conventions of literary research in the context of a meaningful task.

By emphasizing the importance of textual support, the teacher underscores the need to back assertions with concrete evidence.

The teacher uses information from ongoing assessment to plan new instructional goals.

Possible Assessments:

1. Work with students to construct a rubric for assessing the quality of students' analyses.

2. Use the student-generated charts to assess student understanding of the task in order to determine future instructional needs.

3. Ask student groups to use the information on their charts to create a new scene in which the traits of one or more characters are revealed.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways does the charting of characters aid or restrict student understanding?

2. How did working in groups facilitate or limit student learning?

3. How does modeling and guided practice enhance student learning?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could create their own character analysis charts for historical figures.

2. Students' initial inquiry into character could be used as a source for writing character sketches.

3. Students could read any two other texts by Cynthia Rylant and compare them to Missing May.

Thematic Unit: **Preparing for a Multimedia Talk Show**
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 18, 20] 3.2 [6-8, 10-12] 3.3 [6-8, 10-13, 15] 3.4 [12, 20, 23, 25] 3.5 [10, 13-14,17]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [1-3, 6, 9] 3 [1-5, 7-10, 13] 4 [1-5, 9-10]

Ms. Ruiz's fifth-grade class had been studying life in the United States prior to the Civil War. Teams of five were reading books about individuals from that period and beginning to plan presentations about their historical figures to share with the class. One team read *Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave* by Virginia Hamilton and researched his life in the library and on the Internet. They were planning an interactive television talk show for their classmates as their class project. This five-member team had divided the work in order to successfully plan, host, conduct, and videotape the interactive talk show.

Focus

In order to participate in the talk show, the rest of the class needed to know who Anthony Burns was. Therefore, two weeks prior to the thirty-minute talk show, the team prepared a five-minute talk about Anthony Burns. They also created a timeline as a visual aid. Dan, his teammates, and Ms. Ruiz worked together during writing workshop to draft, revise, and edit the speech. Then Dan delivered the historical talk to his classmates. After Dan finished speaking, Carla told the class about the upcoming talk show and then gave the class their assignment.

Collaborative drafting allows students to rely on the support of talk and peer feedback.

"In two weeks, we will be presenting an interactive talk show. The former slave, Reverend Anthony Burns, and his attorney, Richard Dana, will be joining me to discuss Burn's earlier ordeal in Boston. In preparation, Kevin, Jason, Dan, Nadia, and I will be taking turns reading aloud for ten minutes each morning from parts of Virginia Hamilton's book about Anthony Burns. It is important that you come to the talk show with at least one prepared question for either Reverend Burns or Mr. Dana. You'll get some ideas from listening to parts of Virginia Hamilton's book."

Students invest in a task more fully when they are a part of the instructional planning team.

Ms. Ruiz thanked Dan and Carla for their information. She reminded the students that supporting all the teams' work on their projects was part of the class contract. She told them, "During the next two weeks, we will be keeping a chart of possible questions to ask Anthony Burns and Richard Dana. As you can see, I have already taped two large sheets of paper to the back wall. Notice that one is titled, *Questions for Anthony Burns*, and the other is titled, *Questions for Richard Dana*. I want you to record your initial impressions, ideas, and questions in your notebook each day after the read-aloud. During writing workshop, you will have an opportunity to write your questions on the chart. I urge you to consider shaping questions from the draft questions we will be writing during the next two weeks. New questions, of course, may occur to you as you listen to the interview."

Opportunities to prepare questions based on the read-aloud facilitate active listening comprehension.

Although preparation is important, opportunities for spontaneous inquiry should be built into the classroom environment.

The team began the read-alouds while continuing their plans for the talk show. Ms. Ruiz instructed the team to identify criteria for what a successful talk show would include.

"What do you imagine an excellent show would look like? Sound like?" Ms. Ruiz asked. "How could you go about finding that out?"

Although the teacher guides the team to a specific goal, she promotes individual responsibility for learning by allowing the students to discover the evaluative critera through peer discussion.

"Maybe we could watch a couple of talk shows to see what format we like," offered Dan.

"Yeah, you know how they organize the questions and present answers and how they put on the guests," said Jason.

"We could compare them on each point and probably get some good ideas for organizing our own talk show," Dan added.

"I think we've got to be concerned that Kevin and Jason know enough about the men they'll be playing so that they're believable," added Carla.

"So what I'm hearing you say is that in addition to the specific format you'll use, you also want to make sure that it's a plausible, or believable, performance," said Ms. Ruiz.

Summarization as closure reinforces student learning.

"You know how you taught us to invent a timeline for our characters before and after where they appear in our stories?" asked Kevin. "Well, I need to know more about Richard Dana than just what he was doing in the 1850s. Maybe we need a timeline for him too."

"Yeah, I got to know some stuff about Anthony Burns, but I want to know the whole story," added Jason.

"Sounds like you need to do more research and perhaps develop a plan for how you are going to fill any of the gaps in your knowledge about these men," said Ms. Ruiz. "Perhaps this draft of a rubric I started for you can help shape your work for the next week. You'll see that your research is an important part of your work if you are going to give a believable performance. I want you to work as a group to develop the list of criteria for evaluating your videotaped show. On Tuesday, we will work together to create a rubric for assessing your finished project."

Identification of the criteria provides the foundation for developing a valid rubric.

Possible Assessments:

1. Use the rubric prepared by the students to assess the videotaped talk show.

2. Evaluate the quality and quantity of the students' research.

3. Monitor the teams for the members' ability to work together.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How might the use of a reflective journal help students learn more about their organization and research processes?

2. How does a multimedia talk show address the needs of alternative learning styles?

3. Why were the read-alouds an essential part of this activity?

Extension Activities:

1. Students in the class write and/or deliver a critique of the show.

2. Students show the videotape of the show on their local television access channel.

3. Students create a similar interactive talk show featuring three to four literary characters whom they have met in literature this year.

Composing Meaning
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 12] 3.2 [5, 7, 9, 11] 3.3 [6-7, 12, 16] 3.4 [10, 12, 16, 23] 3.5 [7, 12-14]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1[1] 2 [1-5, 7-9] 3 [1-3, 8-10] 4 [1-3, 5, 9]

Eighth-grade language arts students had begun to use the com-puter program, *Hyperstudio*, but their teacher Mrs. Reilly was concerned that the students did not seem to use the program for any sustained projects. As a result, she designed a multimedia project based on Karen Hesse's novel *Phoenix Rising*, which the students had recently read. Her aim was to have students work in small collaborative groups to create a multimedia review of the text.

Focus

Student goups were going to create *Hyperstudio* stacks that con-tained six cards. Mrs. Reilly provided each team with a specific task sheet, defining the contents of each card. The students would use various authoring aspects of the software program (audio, video, importing pictures), learn how to use the digital camera, and download pictures to a card.

Because students were already famil-iar with *Hyperstudio*, the teacher did not need to model its use.

TASK SHEET #1

Working in your teams, you are to construct a Hyperstudio project that would inform a viewer of your feelings and ideas concerning the novel, Phoenix Rising. Specifically, during the next two class periods you are to create a Hyperstudio stack that contains six cards.

1. **Create a title card that introduces each team member and the novel.**
2. **As a team, agree on what you think is the most critical scene in the text. Record a reading of the scene on a card, and create a button for it.**
3. **Create a tableau of the critical scene, and then using the digital camera, photograph the scene. Download the digital photograph, and use it as the third card in your stack. Create a caption for the photograph.**
4. **On card 4, write an explanation of why the scene your group has chosen is a critical scene in the text. Support your assertions with examples from the text.**
5. **On card 5, present a review of the novel. You should use audio, visual, and written text in creating your review. Remember to support your review with examples from the text.**
6. **Create a card where viewers of your stack can record comments.**
7. **Make sure a viewer can navigate through the stack.**

Clear directions and a time frame promote successful task completion.

During two class periods, students worked to create their *Hyperstudio* projects. Although there were seven computers for the seven four-person teams, there was only one digital camera; therefore, students needed to share the camera. Students worked independently to complete the task at hand. Mrs. Reilly used this time to observe students at work and to record some observations concerning students' group process skills, their ability to use the software and hardware, and their rationale for labeling a particular scene as critical. This two-day period also provided the teacher time to observe students composing in different media through the creation of cards. At the close of the second day, each team of students gave Mrs. Reilly a completed task sheet and a disk that contained its *Hyperstudio* project.

Teacher observation is an essential, formative means of assessment.

TASK SHEET #2

Hyperstudio Project

Project Title: Phoenix Rising

                    Date Due   Note from Teacher:
Final Storyboard   11/7
Cards Complete   11/7
Class Presentation   11/10

Names Of Group Members:
1.
2.
3.
4.

Card 1: Title Page with Team Members' Names
Card 2: Critical Scene (talking & text)
Card 3: Titled Tableau (photo)
Card 4: Explanation of Critical Scene
Card 5: Book Review
Card 6: Viewer's Comments

The act of reflecting on and recording the steps of a task makes learning explicit to students.

The next day when students came into class, each team loaded its *Hyperstudio* project onto one of the computers. Students then "roamed the room," moving from computer station to computer station, until all the students had viewed the other teams' *Hyperstudio* projects and written and/or taped a comment for each team, using the viewer's card. Each team then read the comments made by other class members.

The sharing of work enables students to see other models and refine their criteria for assessment as they evaluate their own work and others'.

After the class discussed what they had learned from the project and their evaluation of it, they decided to send a zip disk containing all seven team projects to the author. Two students volunteered to draft a letter to the author introducing the multimedia project.

In sending their work to the author, these students have moved beyond the "fan letter" to an invitation for an intellectual exchange.

Possible Assessments:

1. Work with students to construct a rubric based on Task Sheet #1 to assess students' finished multimedia projects.

2. Have students write a reflective piece in which they assess their participation on the team.

3. Review observation notes during the two-day project and write a summative note on each team's process.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways might completing the tasks outlined in this lesson influence students' later reading and writing experiences?

2. How has the computer changed the range of experience offered in language arts literacy classes?

3. How might Hyperstudio be used for interdisciplinary study?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could now create individual book/media responses using Hyperstudio.

2. Having learned how to use Hyperstudio, students might want to venture out into a more sophisticated tool such as Story Space.

3.Have teams of students create their own Hyperstudio task sheets for other books that they have read.

Resources:

Wagner, Roger. Hyperstudio.

Prereading in Social Studies
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 6-7, 12] 3.2 [5-8] 3.3 [4]
	3.4 [7, 9, 15] 3.5 [5, 8, 12]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8-11, 14] 4 [2-3, 5]

In this middle school classroom, students were reading from a world history/world cultures social studies textbook. In preparation for a new unit, their teacher led them in a prereading task. The teacher's goal was to teach students how to preview informational text in order to generate predictions and to establish a purpose for reading.

Focus

"Today, we are going on a historical treasure hunt," began Ms. Rollo. "I want you to pair with another person in the class and then open your social studies textbook to Chapter 16."

"Now, I can see that all of you have Chapter 16 open," Ms. Rollo said as she surveyed the class. The title of Chapter 16 is 'The Reformation and the Scientific Revolution.' Does the title trigger ideas or associations or questions? Take a minute and talk to your partner."

The teacher activates prior knowledge to help students recognize how much they already know about the concepts.

The teacher turned on an overhead where a word web had been started. The title of the chapter had been printed on a transparency, and a circle had been drawn around the title.

"Okay, let's share with the class some of your ideas, associations, and questions. I'm going to record what you have to say on the transparency. Janelle?"

The teacher uses a word web to provide a visually organized record of student responses.

"Well, the word *revolution* suggests that there might be some fighting that could take place."

"I don't think so," offered Carla. "It's not just revolution but scientific revolution. I think that science is going to change something."

"Yeah, I agree. I think that based on what we read in Chapter 15—you know, the stuff about the Renaissance—that this chapter is going to talk about more types of change," added Peter.

"Maybe there will be some discoveries made by scientists," said Regina.

"I've heard of the Reformation, Ms. Rollo. Some guy wrote on a door or something."

The teacher creates an atmosphere in which students feel free to speculate without negative feedback.

"Can anyone elaborate?" asked Ms. Rollo.

"I'm not sure, but someone named Martin Luther was angry and decided to leave the church or something," Pauline recalled.

"What word do you see inside the word *Reformation*?" probed Ms. Rollo.

"Reform."

"What does *reform*, mean?"

"To change something. Maybe science is going to change something," speculated Leah.

"Well, in a bit of time, we'll get to see. Okay, judging from our word web, we have some loose ideas about the chapter title. We know that the chapter title is one source of information. There are additional ways to gather information about a chapter. In about five minutes, I am going to ask you to work with your partner to decide what you think Chapter 16 is going to be about and to explain how you figured it out."

By telling students that they will be sharing not only their predictions but also their explanations, the teacher invites students to reflect over their thinking processes and fosters metacognitive activity.

"What do you mean, how we figured it out?" asks Jeremy.

"Good question, Jeremy. I'm interested in knowing how you go about making your predictions? What in the text specifically leads you to make your prediction."

"Do you mean, like looking at the pictures and stuff?" asks Raj.

"Yes, that might be one way to familiarize yourself with the chapter's content. I'm confident that we'll have many ways. As you review the chapter, do so with a pen in your hand and your notebook open. I want you to note information from the chapter that you think will help you to make good predictions. Use your own words. Any questions before you begin? Okay, then let's start."

By encouraging students to find their own solutions, the teacher promotes collaborative problem solving.

As the students worked in pairs, Ms. Rollo observed the class. She too was writing in a notebook, but instead of writing about the chapter, she was making anecdotal notes about her students. She was interested in recording how they went about previewing the chapter. After about seven minutes, Ms. Rollo called the students together.

"Juan, please come up to the board and record the predictions. Claire, I'd like you come up to the board, too. I want you to record where students found the information that led them to make their predictions. Class, when you give a prediction, you will also need to tell us the parts of the chapter that you used to make your prediction. I'll model the first reply. My prediction is that this chapter will be in part about Martin Luther who led a religious revolt. I predict this because on page 344 in boldface type, there are four main points listed. This is point one. Are there any other predictions?"

The teacher provides a model by demonstrating her own thought process.

"I predict that the chapter will discuss the impact of the printing press. I think this because on page 347, one of the section titles is 'The printing press spread new ideas,'" said Tony.

"Good response. You used the section title to make that prediction."

"I also think the chapter is going to be about Martin Luther because there's a drawing of him on page 348. The description under the drawing says, 'This portrait of Martin Luther, drawn by one of his friends, shows him thoughtful and serious,'" explained Marla.

"Hey, didn't Martin Luther live in this century?" asked Mark.

Ms. Rollo replied, "You are speaking about Martin Luther King, Jr., who is an important leader in 20th-century America. The Martin Luther discussed in the chapter lived almost 500 years ago. Anything else?"

The teacher first recognizes the legitimacy of the student's attempt to connect with the information and then gently refocuses him on the topic.

"I think there's going to be a split between Luther and the Pope. On page 349 the section title says, 'Pope tried to silence Luther.' There's also a map of Europe, and it shows that power is changing hands," stated Peter.

"It seems to me that this whole chapter is about the Catholic Church and how it loses some power. Pauline and I listed some of the chapter titles, and one common theme is breaking with the Pope and Protestantism spreading," stated Jennifer.

"Good. I'm glad to see that you used the section titles, bold-faced words, pictures, and maps to help you make your predictions. That's good previewing. Now, I want you to work in groups of four in order to generate three lists. Use the information in your notes to make three lists titled *People*, *Places*, and *Events*. Examine your notes and label the information you took from the chapter according to these three categories. Once you have completed your lists, you need to transfer them to charts. On the back table I have large sheets of paper, markers, and tape. One person from your group will need to get a sheet of paper, a colored marker, and some masking tape. You will have the next ten minutes to generate your lists and construct your charts. If you want to use your social studies book to find out more information from the chapter, feel free to do so. At the end of ten minutes, you'll need to be ready to display your chart.

By providing the categories, the teacher helps students sort and organize the information obtained during the preview.

As students completed their small-group work, Ms. Rollo showed them where to hang their charts. Then she said, "It looks like you were able to generate a lot of information. As a team, please take your notebooks and pens and stand by your chart. When you get there, stop and listen. Okay, we are going to take a gallery walk of the room in order to find out the who, what, and where of Chapter 16. You will have one minute at each chart. You'll want to record in your notebooks any information that might be new. I'll tell you when to move. Let's go." The students moved from one chart to the next. At the end of their tour, they returned to their seats.

The gallery walk physically involves students in their learning. Moreover, by comparing group charts, students extend their thinking.

"In the remaining five minutes of class, I want you to write a note to me telling me what interests you about this chapter and asking one question. We'll use your interests and questions to guide us through the chapter. Please also remember that your homework to read pages 344 through 351 is on the board. That's work you'll need to do tonight."

The students wrote their notes to their teacher and then copied their homework assignments.

The next day, Ms. Rollo planned to devote the first few minutes of class to reviewing the methods they had used the day before and explaining to students that they had completed the first three steps of the SQ3R method (Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review).

By asking students to write about the day's activity, the teacher prompts them to reflect over their learning and achieve some closure.

After leading students inductively through previewing, the teacher labels the activity and shows how it fits into the full reading process.

Possible Assessments:

1. Use student charts to assess students' previewing skills.

2. Compare subsequent anecdotal records about students' prereading behaviors with those made during this lesson to see whether students use previewing skills independently.

3. Review students' questions included in the written notes for relevance to the topic and to purposes for reading.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can teachers encourage students to apply the previewing strategies used in this lesson to other texts they read?

2. How can language arts teachers engage content area teachers in the process of teaching relevant reading skills for their content areas?

3. What other reading-to-learn strategies could be taught?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students research other sources (e.g., the Internet, encyclopedias, biographies) relevant to the topic of the text.

2. Have students create a newspaper with feature articles, news stories, and editorials relevant to the period being studied.

3. Have students dramatize historical events of the period and present them to the class.

Dialogue Notebooks
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.3 [2-4, 18] 3.4 [3-6, 18, 22-24]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2-3] 3 [1-4, 8] 4 [3]

To encourage reading at recreational and instructional levels, a grade 8 teacher opened the school year by establishing that students would read each day for at least 30 minutes. To help students meet that demand, the teacher, Ms. Martin, had a wide range of books available in the classroom and allowed in-class time for reading. The class also used the school library for book selection. In addition, because the teacher wanted to engage individual students in literary discussions, she had chosen written correspondence as a forum for that dialogue. Each week students wrote a letter to the teacher in which they described what they were reading and how they were reading. She replied during part of the silent reading segment. She did not mark letters for errors but modeled correct usage, spelling, and punctuation in her reply. She also modeled the way mature readers exchange ideas about literature. Below are examples of her letters.

Focus

When mature readers model their responses to literature, students learn how to think about and respond to their own transactions with text.

9/20/98

Dear Catherine,

      It's great that you are noticing some differences in the rate you are reading and in your response to parts of the books. I'm delighted to know that you are developing as a reader. Good for you. What's Whisper Down the Lane about? I have never heard of it. Is it a romance novel?

      I'm glad you're part of the editing group, too. I think that once our computers are set up, there will be a lot more text to edit. We're going to start a poetry unit this coming week. I've been thinking about all the different ways to create poems. I'm sure you and your classmates have a few ideas that I haven't ever thought of. I can't wait for all of us to start writing.

                 Talk with you soon,
                 Ms. Martin

P.S. What did you think of The River?

The teacher's acknowledgment that she is unfamiliar with a text establishes that teachers, too, are learners.

During the course of the marking period, the types of letters the teacher and her students wrote began to change. Although many of the early letters were broadly focused, the later letters tended to focus on a particular reading experience. In October, Travis, who had finished reading Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, wrote his teacher asking for other books like Holden's story. He also wondered whether he and his teacher might communicate via e-mail. In the following letter, Ms. Martin responded to the growing sophistication.

Changes in the students' letters reflect increasing refinement of the students' thinking while reading.

10/27/98

Dear Travis,

You can reach me at lrngsys@aol.com. My screen name is Marty.

I also found that after reading Catcher I wanted more books like it. I can't tell you how many of my former students recognized a big change in their reading after finishing Catcher. But you need to tell me what intrigued you about Catcher. For example, if you liked the idea of teenagers trying to survive, you might like Hatchet by Gary Paulsen. If you enjoyed the confrontation between the teen world and the adult world, you might like The Pigman by Paul Zindel. Or you might enjoy reading Huck Finn by Mark Twain. Let's talk about it at our reading conference on Friday. You can also ask for suggestions from other students during our sharing time on Monday.

Two additional books come to mind: one is a book by Robert Cormier, The Chocolate War. I'm wondering what you might think about the main character, Jerry. The other book focuses on a young girl, Celine. That book is written by Brock Cole and is titled, Celine. Cole is the author of the book Goats, which you read earlier in September. I think you would enjoy both The Chocolate War and Celine. We have two copies of each book in our class library. Preview them and let me know what book you end up choosing.

Keep reading,
Ms. Martin

By offering a range of texts, the teacher invites the student to take responsibility for learning and to think critically about his or her own reading choices.

Possible Assessments:

1. Review the contents of the written dialogue with the student for evidence of the student's literacy growth. This could be part of an evaluation conference.

2. Have students write a reflective essay on their growth as readers during the marking period. Evidence to support their conclusions can be drawn from their written correspondence.

3. Ask students to assess the impact of the written correspondence on their reading behaviors and to share their findings in class discussion.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways might the weekly exchange of letters influence student reading choices?

2. How does a dialogue with a teacher influence classroom climate?

3. How does writing about texts in a risk-free environment influence the students' regard for books?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could write to or e-mail other students concerning texts that they've read.

2. Students could keep a reading diary for a fixed amount of time, recording such information as title, length of text, and location of text (Internet, book, cereal box) and drawing conclusions about "My Life as a Reader."

3. Students with shared interests in an author or theme can be paired or grouped to present a panel discussion about their shared reading interest.

Charting Excitement—Studying Plot
Grade 6

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 4, 6-7, 12-13] 3.2 [5-6, 8] 3.3 [7]
	3.4 [1, 10, 12-13, 21] 3.5 [8]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1, 3, 8-9] 4 [2-3]

Students in a sixth-grade language arts literacy class were already familiar with book clubs. However, the teacher had found that students experienced difficulty discussing the books, engaging more in turn-taking than in dialogue. In order to better facilitate students' direct conversations about a shared text, the teacher asked the students to plot excitement maps to make sure that all students had a firm grounding in the plot.

Working in groups of four, the students constructed excitement maps based on the novel they had just finished reading. During a two-week period, the students read the books and met two times in small book clubs to discuss the story. The mystery books the students read included *Wait Till Helen Comes* by Mary Hahn, *House of Dies Drear* by Virginia Hamilton, *The Haunting of SafeKeep* by Eve Bunting, and *The Man Who Was Poe* by Avi.

In order to create their maps, each group first listed in chronological order the main events of the story and numbered them. The students began by coming to agreement on and plotting the most exciting event, placing a dot on the highest point of the graph. Next, they plotted the least exciting part, and then all the points in between. After the chart was plotted, the points were connected to show the rhythm of the story's plot.

Focus

Participating in book clubs facilitates appreciation and discussion of literature.

Reading and discussing different examples of the same genre deepens understanding of the form.

Negotiating and rank ordering the events provides additional opportunities for discussing and evaluating the text.

Excitement Plot

Excitement

```
10 _____
 9 _____
 8 _____
 7 _____
 6 _____
 5 _____
 4 _____
 3 _____
 2 _____
 1 _____
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 11 12 13
```

Events

After the groups had completed their charts, the students hung them in the hallway.

Their teacher directed students to examine all of the maps to see if any patterns could be found. Students did notice that a high point of excitement usually could be found at the opening and near the closing of the novel. Later in a whole-class discussion, students reported their observations and moved on to identify common elements in the mysteries.

Observations based on these plot maps enrich student's schema for the mystery genre and enables learners to make better predictions in future reading.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor student participation in identifying and ranking the events.

2. Ask students to create an artistic work (e.g., a drawing or collage) of the most exciting event in the novel.

3. Ask students to write a comparison of their understanding of this novel with their understanding of a novel for which they have not completed a plot map.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways does the visual reproduction of a text through mapping aid and restrict student understanding of the text?

2. How did working in the groups facilitate and limit students' learning? How else might the groups be formed in the future to facilitate all students' learning?

3. How might having students work individually rather than in groups change the dynamic of this activity?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students create individual excitement maps to use in oral presentations of their independent reading.

2. Encourage students to use excitement maps in other contexts, such as mapping a social studies event (e.g., a war or a migration).

3. Have small groups of students conduct an author's study in which they read several of the writer's works and prepare a panel discussion of the texts.

Sentence Combining
Grade 6

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [4, 7, 12, 14] 3.2 [8-9] 3.3 [6, 10-11]
	3.4 [6, 8, 20]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	3 [1-3, 10] 4 [3, 5]

In Ms. Madden's middle school classroom, students had read and enjoyed the short story, "Who's Cribbing?" by Jack Lewis. Some had commented on the author's use of complex sentences to communicate many ideas. Ms. Madden wanted to teach her students how to write more complex sentences so that they could improve their own writing using varied sentence structures. Building on a previous demonstration of sentence combining, she constructed a sentence-combining exercise, using sentences from the short story.

Focus

To begin the lesson, Ms. Madden displayed the first three sentences on an overhead.

1. *The editors of this magazine are not in the habit of making open accusations.*

2. *The editors of this magazine are well aware of the fact in the writing business there will always be some overlapping of plot ideas.*

3. *It is hard for the editors of this magazine to believe that you are not familiar with the works of Todd Thromberry.*

She asked, "Who can think of a way to keep the meaning intact, yet combine the three sentences to make one sentence? Take a minute to try combining these sentences into one sentence in your notebook. I'll try to do the same up here." As students wrote, Ms. Madden recorded her own sentence on an overhead but did not display it. It read:

Teacher versions, displayed too early, can preempt student thinking.

As magazine editors, ones who are not in the habit of making open accusations, we are well aware of the fact that in the writing business there will always be some overlapping of plot ideas; yet we find it hard to believe that you are not familiar with the works of Todd Thromberry.

After Ms. Madden finished writing, she directed a few students to record their sentences on the board. As these students worked, she had the rest of the class share their new sentences with partners.

Exposure to different versions of text invites student reflection on language use.

After a few minutes, Ms. Madden gathered the class together. "Let's look at the ways we have combined these sentences. As you consider these sentences, ask yourself whether the rewrites make sense and maintain the original ideas? Jeremy, please read your combined sentence."

Discussion of written language makes language the object of conscious thought and promotes metacognition.

> *The editors of this magazine are not in the habit of making open accusations, are well aware of the fact in the writing business there will always be some over - lapping of plot ideas, and find it hard to believe that you are not familiar with the works of Todd Thromberry.*

"Does Jeremy's sentence maintain the original intent?" asked Ms. Madden. The class responded that it did.

"Our next question, then, is whether this version is economical. Do you know what I mean by that?" The class was quiet.

"To write in an economical manner means to use as few words as possible and still maintain the meaning. Are there any extraneous words in Jeremy's version?"

"He could have written *The magazine editors* and that would have gotten rid of two words," offered Sarah.

"Yes, he could have done that. Think about it, Jeremy, and decide whether you would like to revise. Let's look at another sentence. Paula, please read your sentence."

> *We find it hard to believe that you are not aware of the works of Todd Thromberry.*

"Does Paula's sentence maintain the original intent?" asked Ms. Madden.

Paula quickly answered that she didn't know she needed to include all of the ideas in the other sentences.

"What information would be important to add?"

"That the editors don't make accusations and that sometimes there are stories whose plots overlap," offered Paula.

"Good. Let's see what Jamal wrote."

> *The editors of this magazine are not in the habit of making open accusations, are well aware of the fact in the writing business there will always be some over - lapping of plot ideas, however, we find it hard to believe that you are not familiar with the works of Todd Thromberry.*

"How does Jamal's sentence differ from Jeremy's sentence?" asked Ms. Madden. "Take a minute to talk that over with a person seated near you."

"Well," said Stacy, "Susie and I noticed that Jeremy used the word *and* and Jamal used the word *however.*"

Although economy of language is a sophisticated concept for students in this age group, its introduction begins to build awareness of its importance for clear communication.

The teacher's positive attitude and gentle guidance allow students to maintain ownership and regard for their work.

The teacher's questions promote increasingly close reading of the text until students see the importance of individual words.

"Nice observation. Class, how do the different word choices change your understanding of the sentence?"

"Well, in Jamal's sentence, you can see that the editors don't necessarily believe the guy they're writing to. They find it hard to believe," said Tran.

"Good reading, Tran. In Jeremy's sentence, the use of the connector *and* makes all three parts of the sentence equal in tone. In Jamal's sentence, the use of the connector *however* creates a break. A new tone is indicated. Does anyone know how we might repunctuate Jamal's sentence to indicate that break more forcefully?"

"Not the semicolon," Roger moaned. The class laughed.

> The lowly semicolon has taken on a life of its own in the class.

"Yes, the dreaded semicolon," Ms. Madden said and then laughed. She and the students had been studying semicolons earlier in the year.

Ms. Madden erased one comma and inserted a semicolon so that Jamal's sentence now read:

> *The editors of this magazine are not in the habit of making open accusations, are well aware of the fact in the writing business there will always be some over - lapping of plot ideas; however, we find it hard to believe that you are not familiar with the works of Todd Thromberry.*

After reviewing some other sentences and sharing her own sentence, Ms. Madden directed students to work in pairs to construct six sentences from the sentences listed on a handout. The sentences were grouped so that students needed to combine two to six sentences at a time.

> The teacher has used demonstration, modeling, and guided practice before asking students to work on larger tasks independently.

Sample Sentence Completion

A.
1. I do not know Todd Thromberry.
2. I am not aware of the existence of Todd Thromberry.

B.
3. A theory has occurred to me.
4. It is a truly weird theory.
5. I probably wouldn't even suggest it to anyone.
6. The only person I would suggest it to is a science fiction editor.

C.
7. Feel free to contact us.
8. Feel free to contact us again.
9. Contact us again when you have something more original.

D.
10. The enclosed is not really a manuscript.
11. I am submitting this series of letters.
12. I am submitting carbon copies.
13. I am submitting correspondence.
14. I am hopeful that you might give some credulity.
15. The happenings have been seemingly unbelievable.

E.
16. I have never copied any writings from Todd Thromberry.
17. I have never seen any writing of Todd Thromberry.

F.
18. Mr. Thromberry is no longer among us.
19. Many other writers became widely recognized after death.
20. Mr. Thromberry became widely known after his death.
21. Mr. Thromberry's death happened in 1941.

After students had finished the assignment, they passed in their work for review. Ms. Madden planned to have students use this method to revise one of their own pieces of writing.

Possible Assessments:

1. Read students' sentence-combining efforts to ascertain whether students grasp the concepts of language economy and subordination/coordination of ideas.

2. Monitor students' writing over time for use of complex sentence structures.

3. Have students bring in varied samples of complex sentence structures they find in newspapers and magazines. Student work can be assessed for sentence variety.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Under what conditions would students transfer the sentence-combining methods learned in this exercise to their own writing?

2. What activities could help students understand that the coordination and subordination of clauses influence the message?

3. What impact, if any, might this activity have on reading comprehension?

Extension Activities

1. Students construct sentence-combining exercises using their own text or other texts, exchange with a partner for completion, and discuss the results.

2. Provide students with complex sentences and ask them to break the sentences down into kernels, or smallest complete thoughts.

3. Provide students with a sample complex sentence containing at least two connectors or conjunctions. Working in pairs, students experiment with substitute conjunctions to assess the effect of each substitution on the meaning.

Reading: ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***
                                                        Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [8, 12-13] 3.2 [6-8] 3.3 [7, 17]
	3.4 [6, 10, 12-13] 3.5 [7-8]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8-10] 4 [1-2]

Ms. Armentano's fifth-grade class had just finished reading C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Throughout the reading, Ms. Armentano had had students pay particular attention to the character development of the four children in the story: Lucy, Susan, Peter, and Edmund. Students had maintained a character log as they read, recording their impressions of the characters based on key scenes in the story. Now as a prewriting activity, students were asked to demonstrate their ability to describe a character in the novel.

Focus

Ms. Armentano asked students to compose a letter to be sent from the professor, a character in the story, to the author, C. S. Lewis, specifically developing the topic, "My! How _____ (a character in the book) has changed since I first met him/her in the story." Each student was to select one of the four children to write about. Today's lesson dealt specifically with a prewriting activity aimed at teaching students how to find textual evidence to support their impressions of a particular character. Ms. Armentano arranged the class into groups of four students each. Each student was assigned a role, such as artist, reporter, text checker/time keeper, and writer.

By identifying the letter as the end goal, the teacher promotes student motivation for today's activity.

Each group had to brainstorm a list of character traits for their assigned character. They could choose descriptors that applied to the character at any time in the story. Descriptors were to be recorded on a Venn diagram. In the left circle, students were to list traits evident near the beginning of the novel; in the right circle, they were to list traits evident nearer the end of the story; and in the junction they were to list enduring traits of the character.

Use of the Venn diagram as a graphic organizer appeals to multimodal learners.

Ms. Armentano initially gave the groups only 15 minutes to complete their Venn diagrams, hoping to raise their level of concern and thereby encourage them to work attentively on the task. As she circulated among the groups, she noticed that most of the students were referring to their reading logs as well as to the text itself for help identifying appropriate descriptors for their character. She also observed, however, that although the groups were working diligently, they could not complete the task in the allotted time. She therefore told the time keepers to advise the group that the time limit had been extended by another five minutes. At the end of 20 minutes, each group's reporter shared its diagram and samples of its character's traits with the entire class.

Careful instructional planning and classroom management facilitates successful small-group learning.

Ongoing monitoring may lead to revision of plans.

As the next step, Ms. Armentano asked the groups to expand the Venn diagrams into maps by drawing bubbles outside the Venn diagram. The bubbles were to be connected by lines to specific traits appearing inside the diagram. Ms. Armentano asked students

to use these bubbles to identify specific scenes in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* that supported each character trait listed. "Inside each bubble," Ms. Armentano explained, "I want you to write the page, paragraph, and line numbers related to the targeted trait. When you write the first draft of your letter, you will use the bubbles to locate your supporting statements from the story."

Ms. Armentano again set a time limit for the task and asked the time keepers to advise her when their groups had completed this work. After the checkers confirmed the accuracy of the bubble citations, each group reported to the rest of the class. Students then taped their maps to the board so that everyone could refer to them.

In the next lesson, students would choose one of the four characters and use the maps as a starting point for drafting their individual letters.

By emphasizing the importance of textual support, the teacher underscores the need to back assertions with concrete evidence.

Possible Assessments:

1. Assess student ability to understand character change by noting differences between the traits listed in the left and right circles of the Venn diagram.

2. Have each group member evaluate the diagram and bubbles as resources for writing their first draft.

3. Have students evaluate another group's textual support for traits identified in the Venn diagram.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing prewriting activities in cooperative groups prior to individual drafting?

2. In what ways does Ms. Armentano's cooperative learning task allow for both interdependence and individual accountability?

3. In seeking textual support for the identified traits, will Ms. Armentano's class need more direct modeling of good evidence? If so, at what point should she intervene to provide it?

Extension Activities:

1. Following drafting, the same groups could reconvene for peer revision conferences.

2. Ms. Armentano could use the drafts as a jumping-off point for explaining and illustrating the difference between direct and indirect statements, as well as the correct use and punctuation of textual quotations.

3. Ms. Armentano and the class could jointly develop a scoring rubric.

Writing the Unexpected Outcome
Grade 6

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6-8, 12, 14, 16] 3.2 [7-9] 3.3 [1-2, 5, 7, 10]
	3.4 [14, 18, 21-22]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8, 10] 4 [2-3]

Students in Mrs. Winters' sixth-grade class used Ernest Thayer's classic poem "Casey at the Bat" as a springboard for drafting a story in which the reader's expectations are reversed. The current lesson introduced a number of prewriting strategies leading to the first draft.

Focus

In the previous lesson, students read "Casey at the Bat." Class discussion then focused on the poet's careful development of the expectations of both the reader and the characters in the poem. Everyone in the poem, it appears, believed that if Casey, a famous and feared baseball player, could have a chance to bat, he would get the hit needed to win the game. As the poem details, Casey did get a chance to bat; and with all hopes resting on his ability, he struck out to end the game. The unexpected, the unthinkable, had happened.

Literature provides rich models for students writing.

At the start of the current lesson, after a brief review of the poem, Mrs. Winters said, "Today, you're going to begin drafting a story that ends with an unexpected outcome, a reversal of some kind. 'Casey at the Bat' had one such ending. I'd like to tell you a story with another kind of unexpected ending."

Mrs. Winters then proceeded to recount briefly an incident from her own experience. Together, she and the class clarified what was unexpected or reversed at the end of that story.

Teacher modeling enables students to grasp the scope of the activity.

Next, she told students, "Take a few minutes to think about other instances that you know from literature or your own experience in which someone's expectations were reversed or unexpected." After a few minutes, she said, "Turn to your partner and share at least one example each. Afterwards, you will be retelling your partner's story to the class."

By informing students of the next activity, the teacher promotes careful storytelling and listening.

As students worked in pairs, Mrs. Winters circulated to be sure students were on task. She also announced when it was time to switch roles as speakers/listeners. She then told the class, "I want each of you to report your partner's incident. As you listen to these incidents, try to anticipate how you could develop one of them into a story of your own."

Students then took turns reporting their partner's responses to the class. As each speaker finished, Mrs. Winters helped students clarify the nature of the unexpected reversal.

Feedback from the teacher, the part-ner, and the class provides important implicit and explicit information and promotes reflection.

Next, Mrs. Winters told the class, "Choose a reversal idea that you just heard or any reversal idea you have identified on your own. I want you to do a 10-minute freewrite on the topic. Just write about the topic in story form, if possible. Try not to stop writing during this time. Order does not count right now; just record as much as you can think of that will go into your story, such as character, setting, and events."

Uninterrupted freewriting fosters risk taking and generation of richer ideas.
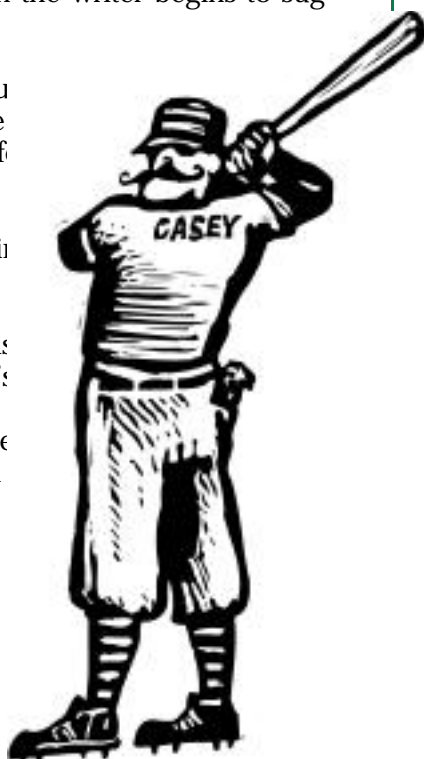
As students did their freewriting, Mrs. Winters sat at her desk doing a free write of her own. Following the free write, she had one student distribute stacks of index cards to the class. Then she announced, "The next step is to review your free write and extract from it the order of events in your story. You have a stack of index cards. On each card I want you to record one detail from your story-in-the-making. Use as many cards as you like. First, let me show you my story on the overhead to give you an idea of how I will do my cards."

Mrs. Winters placed a transparency copy of her free write on the overhead. She illustrated how she copied one fact or idea from her free write onto an index card. She then set a time limit of 15 minutes for students to work on this task. Once again, she worked along with her students.

The teacher's freewriting serves as a model and a teaching tool for demonstrating how to organize ideas.

Following this activity, she displayed several of her "note cards" on the overhead, explaining the order of the events in the telling of her story. She then asked students to put the cards in the order they would use for their stories. Near the end of the lesson, she asked students to pair off, explain the order of their cards, and identify the point at which the writer begins to suggest an unexpected outcome.

The following day, Mrs. Winters had stu[dents take] out their cards and begin drafting while [she] moved about, coaching and providing f[eedback] when asked.

[S]ince this is a new form for these stu[d]ents, the teacher wants to be avail[a]ble to help them when necessary.

In the next lesson, students were goin[g] to work in pairs as peer listeners to guide the revision of the drafts. Mrs. Winters was going to have them revi[se] the "Casey" poem to notice the poet'[s] reliance on action verbs to move the [story] forward. Students would then analyz[e] their own stories with a view toward using more precise verbs.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor as students complete their cards and listen as pairs exchange information about their index cards.

2. Read the O'Henry story "The Gift of the Magi" and have students identify the reversal.

3. Have each student find two examples of cartoons illustrating an unexpected outcome to share with the rest of the class.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why is it helpful for students to engage in a series of prewriting activities, such as the ones presented in this lesson? Does such prewriting increase the likelihood that the draft will be more robust or that the details of the story will follow in logical sequence?

2. How or why might it be beneficial to use freewriting as a prelude to drafting?

3. What criteria might the teacher and students develop to guide the peer listening activity following the first draft?

Extension Activities:

1. Have students collect examples of sport stories and poems for a class anthology that includes published literature as well as their own writing.

2. Ask students to review the contents of their writing folders to identify drafts that contain or could contain an unexpected outcome they could now develop.

3. Encourage students to conduct a media search of weekly television programs and/or movies that focus on unexpected outcomes.

4. Have students work with partners to script their stories and present their scripts to the class.

Reading: Using Adverb Clauses
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 12, 14] 3.2 [5-9] 3.3 [10-11, 13]
	3.4 [12, 20, 22]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 7, 9-10] 4 [1-3, 10]

In Mr. Whitney's seventh-grade class, the students were studying Native Americans, in this case, the Sioux. After reading Mari Sandoz's essay, *These Were the Sioux*, students had drafted magazine articles describing a modern-day visit from an 18th-century Sioux boy or girl. Mr. Whitney then saw the opportunity for a lesson on the use of adverbial clauses not only because of Sandoz's use of them, but because his students' writing lacked sentence variety. A revision session implementing this concept would follow the presentation.

Focus

Mr. Whitney began the lesson by reminding his students of previous lessons on adverbs and their importance to readers and writers. He then took the class through a review of the use of adverbs and the questions they answer. "What do adverbs modify?" questioned Mr. Whitney. A few students raised their hands hesitantly.

Review helps to reinforce previously learned concepts.

"Verbs?" asked Rachel.

"Yes. Can you remember the other kinds of words they modify?" coaxed Mr. Whitney.

Through inductive questions, the teacher moves the students from understanding the practical value of adverbial clauses to identifying their structure.

"I think they modify adjectives, too," added Rachel.

"And other adverbs," Vera called out.

"Good thinking! Now, what questions will an adverb answer about the word it modifies?"

Students were puzzled at first. Mr. Whitney wrote this sentence on the chalkboard: *Yesterday we wrote a 'how to' manual.* "What question does *yesterday* answer?" queried Mr. Whitney.

"When!" called out Jahmel.

"Right!" applauded Mr. Whitney. "Can we now think of the other questions?"

Several students recalled *Where? How? How often?* and *To what extent?* These questions were noted on chart paper for display. Mr. Whitney then explained that adverbial clauses are used in the same way that adverbs are used.

Mr. Whitney reminded students that a clause contains a subject and a predicate as well as a subordinating conjunction. He then instructed the class to pair up to reread Mari Sandoz's essay and to find five examples from the essay that contain adverbial clauses. Each pair was given a piece of chart paper and a box of markers with which to write the sentences down. "Remember to refer to our list of subordinate conjunctions when trying to locate the adverbial clauses," said Mr. Whitney.

Working in pairs provides students with support for learning as they discover concepts.

By clearly defining the task, the teacher focuses the students' learning.

The students went to work identifying and writing examples of sentences with adverbial clauses, writing these on chart paper and underlining the clauses. As students began to finish up, Mr. Whitney instructed pairs to tape their findings on the board. With the class reassembled, Mr. Whitney directed students' attention to the work.

Analysis of professional texts for stylistic devices can be used to improve student writing but should be used judiciously.

"*If he grew up like the Sioux of the old hunting days, he would be made equal to the demands of his expanding world*," read Mr. Whitney. "Good example, Andrew and Nina! How were you able to identify this as an adverbial clause?"

"Well, we just started skimming through the passage. When we came to a word that we thought was a subordinate conjunction, we checked to see if a subject and predicate followed," responded Nina.

Andrew then chimed in, "Yeah, and the next thing we did was to check and see if the group of words answered one of the questions we listed for adverbs."

When students share strategies for learning, other students can adopt them.

"You mean the questions that an adverb can answer?" Mr. Whitney asked. "And what question does this clause answer?" Mr. Whitney further questioned.

"How?" both replied.

"Correct," said Mr. Whitney.

The class continued this way with Mr. Whitney questioning and pairs of students explaining their choices. During the discussion, Mr. Whitney guided the students to recognize the difference between clauses and phrases. He concluded the lesson by saying, "Now that we understand how adverbial clauses can enhance and clarify an author's meaning, we're going to use them to improve our own writing. We will start this tomorrow."

Categorizing in this case represents higher-order thinking (synthesis), especially since students are expected to defend their choices.

The next day during Writer's Workshop, Mr. Whitney placed—with student permission—a typewritten transparency of the student's essay on the overhead projector. "Today you will be helping a classmate to revise his essay by using adverbial phrases and clauses to create sentence variety. Remember, we want to focus on answering some of the questions an adverb answers," directed Mr. Whitney. Mr. Whitney first located a sentence that could be revised by using an adverbial clause.

Swiftly Runs was frightened by the television. I know he had never seen one before.

"How can these two sentences be revised to add variety and give more information by combining them using an adverbial clause?" questioned Mr. Whitney.

"Could the writer try, 'He was frightened by the television because he had never seen one'?" questioned Ramona.

"Terrific!" said Mr. Whitney, and the class worked on a number of other sentences together. Students were then instructed to begin the same activity with their own essays. Mr. Whitney moved around the room, offering help and advice during this part of the Writer's Workshop.

By monitoring students' learning, teachers can vary lessons to clarify and provide feedback.

At the end of the period, Mr. Whitney brought the class back together. "Would someone like to share a revision with the class?" Several students read their initial revisions. Mr. Whitney wrote a number of the original sentences and revised sentences on an overhead transparency so that the class could discuss them. As a homework assignment, students were asked to complete their revisions.

"Look for ways to combine sentences by using adverbial clauses. Tomorrow we will be working on peer group responses. Our focus will be on the use of adverb clauses for elaboration in writing," said Mr. Whitney.

Possible Evaluations:

1. Compare students' use of adverbial clauses in their first and second drafts of writing.

2. Use a rubric to assess students' revisions.

3. Assess students' ability to transfer their learning by providing copies of a newspaper article and asking students to underline all of the adverbial clauses.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do Mr. Whitney's strategies differ from traditional textbook approaches?

2. What are the effects of using student-generated text in the teaching of grammatical concepts?

3. How might this lesson make students more conscious and articulate about their use of written language?

Extension Activities:

1. Present a lesson on the use of relative pronouns and adjective clauses as tools for writing revision.

2. Develop a companion lesson on the use of adverbial clauses as transitional devices.

3. Have students explore the change in meaning when they transpose the subordinate and independent clauses of complex sentences.

4. Have students look at a text they have enjoyed reading to note particularly effective use of adverbs and adverbial clauses.

Vocabulary in Context
Middle School

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6-7, 15] 3.2 [6-8] 3.4 [6, 12, 15]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	3 [1-4, 7, 10] 4 [1-3]

Ms. Laird had noticed that her fifth-grade students were reluctant to take vocabulary risks in their writing. In this particular class, approximately half of the sixteen students had special education needs. Ms. Manser, the special education teacher who stayed with her students in the class, spent time weekly with Ms. Laird, planning with her to meet the needs of all the students in the class. One decision these teachers made was to develop more vocabulary study based on familiar literature and then to encourage the students to incorporate their new learning in their writing.

Focus

On this particular day, the teachers had prepared a vocabulary lesson using *The Monument*, one of the books the students had been reading as part of their author study of Gary Paulsen.

Skills taught in the context of meaningful experiences are learned more readily.

"Good morning, everyone," began Ms. Laird, "May I have your attention now. I'd like to start today's lesson with a question. Can you tell me what you do when you are reading and come to a word whose meaning you do not know?

Explicit questions invite students to attend to and participate in the lesson.

"I just skip it," said Francine.

"Well, sometimes I use the dictionary," contributed Bill.

Ms. Laird continued, "These are both good strategies or approaches to use. You can skip the word, particularly if you don't think it is very important to the story. You can use a dictionary if there is one nearby and if you want to take the time to look up the word. Are there any other ways to find the meaning of a word?"

"I try to figure it out…just guess what it might mean," offered Mohammed.

Student recall of prior knowledge helps them to construct new concepts based on the lesson.

"That's another good way. You probably all do this…guess word meanings when you read…and today we are going to learn some specific strategies, or methods, for making these intelligent guesses. Guessing doesn't always work, but often there are clues to word meaning right in the sentences and paragraphs we read. Today we will be focusing on how to look very closely at these to find the clues. I want to start by first giving you a very, very short activity. Danny, will you please give these papers to everyone? Thank you."

Choosing Danny, one of the special education students, was a good idea because he tended to be inattentive during a lesson. Once the papers were distributed, Ms. Laird continued, "The paper in front of you has two parts. Part A, on the front of the

Special education students need opportunity to participate fully in the class.

paper, lists five words that you may not know and four possible synonyms or words with the same meaning under each word. Read the five unknown words on the left and circle your choices." Students were given the following words and word choices in Part A.

myriad
a) miracle   b) great number   c) skilled person   d) painting

permeated
a) appointed   b) allowed in   c) spread through   d) harmed

castigate
a) punish   b) support   c) confuse   d) search

indigence
a) poverty   b) knowledge   c) innocence   d) culture

feign
a) desire   b) pretend   c) emotional   d) graceful

While the class worked, Ms. Laird could hear them making such comments as, "How can I tell what this means? I can't even pronounce it." and "I've never seen this word before. How am I supposed to get the meaning?" Ms. Manser helped the children who needed the words read to them. When all students had completed Part A, Ms. Laird continued, "Now turn your papers over, and you will find Part B. Part B contains the same five words and the same word choices. But now the unknown words are used in sentences. Again, try to figure out the meaning of each of the five unknown words." Part B had this information:

myriad
Because the sky was so clear, we were able to see a myriad of stars.
a) miracle   b) great number   c) skilled person   d) painting

permeated
When the smoke from the cigar permeated the room, the visitor apologized.
a) appointed   b) allowed in   c) spread through   d) harmed

castigate
The dictator said he would castigate anyone who opposed him.
a) punish   b) support   c) confuse   d) search

indigence
The family's indigence meant they could not afford to buy a house or to send their children to college.
a) poverty   b) knowledge   c) innocence   d) culture

feign
If she could feign sleep, the child thought, she would not have to take her medicine.
a) desire   b) pretend   c) emotional   d) graceful

Directions should be given orally as well as in print to appeal to different modalities.

Students learn new words more rapidly when the words appear in context rather than in isolation.

As students started doing Part B, the teachers could hear them making such comments as "This is easy!" or "I know it now that it's in a sentence."

Again Ms. Manser helped individuals read the sentences. Once all the students had completed Part B and reviewed their answers, Ms. Laird asked, "Who can tell us how the sentences helped you find the synonyms for words you did not know?"

Rashawn replied, "They tell it to you right in the sentence."

"Yeah," added Paulette. "Like in that smoky room one. You can imagine the scene. If the visitors apologized, they must have really smoked people out."

In a supportive environment, students feel free to explain their problem-solving strategies.

"And that one with the poor family, you're told *meant.* So like it's the dictionary definition almost," noted Kristen.

"You have mentioned several types of context clues," said Ms. Laird. "Context clues are hints authors give in their writing. Today we are going to look at three kinds of context clues." Ms. Laird turned to the easel where she had listed three kinds of context clues: synonym or restatement clues, experience or common sense clues, and punctuation clues. You have already used two of these clues. Which two have you used? Rashawn, which clue did you use?"

"I think I used the restatement clue cause it was right there in the sentence."

Paulette added, "I think I used common sense because I know that cigars stink."

"Yes. You have been using context clues without even knowing it," replied Ms. Laird. Why don't we now take a look at some sentences in *The Monument* to see what clues Gary Paulsen gives us? Please take out your books and turn to page 18."

Ms. Manser circulated around the room to ensure that the students were following these directions. She paid particular attention to the inclusion students. "Mary, you need to take out the book the class is reading."

"I lost it, Ms. Manser."

"Get one from the classroom library for now and see me after class. We will get another one for you." Mary did as she was asked, looking relieved that she would have help with her problem.

Student dignity is preserved when problems are managed without penalty or embarrassment.

"Look at the large paragraph in the middle of this page," said Ms. Laird. "Find the word *welded.*" She wrote *welded* on the board and continued, "It appears twice. Then see if you can locate any clues to the meaning of this word. The clues can be in the sentence or in another one nearby."

"I see it," called out Emily. "It says, '*I know they're welded because I tried to get one loose, and they didn't move.*' It's kind of a definition. Doesn't move. Sort of stuck together."

"Exactly, Emily. Paulsen helps us to understand his meaning when he says the cannon balls are *welded* by finishing the sentence with a partial definition. Let's try another sentence. Look now at page 41. Remember that in this part of our story Rocky has to wear a dress to go to the courthouse meeting about the monument. In the middle of page 41, Rocky talks about how she feels dressed this way. See if you can find where she uses the word *strutted*, then see if you can figure out from the rest of the paragraph what this word means." She wrote *strutted* on the board.

After a brief period, Ethan remarked, "I think it has to do with walking. She says she wanted to strut, but then she says, '*It's hard to do with one leg stiff*,' so it must have to do with some way of walking.

"Good. Let's take this a little further. How is she feeling in this dress? What kind of walking might she want to do while she is dressed this way?"

"Proud like," commented JoAnne. "I think she must've felt proud because she says she felt kinda pretty."

"Right. So *strutted* would mean walking proudly. In this case we didn't have any restatement," explained Ms. Laird. "We had to figure out word meaning from our experience and how we would feel in this situation. If we think about it for a bit, we can put together the clues the author has given us and define the word. The definition we create may not be precisely the same as a definition in the dictionary; but if the meaning is clear and it fits in with the other ideas you are reading, your definition will be close enough to know what it means. Turn now to page 78. Near the end of this page you will see the words, *on the morrow*. Read up until the point where the author tells us what this phrase means. Raise your hand when you find the clue."

The students readily turned to the assigned page. After several minutes, Alicia called out, "I found it. Look on page 79. Rocky is talking, and she says, '*…maybe I could take some time in the morning—on the morrow—to meet Mick and help him.*'"

"That's very good, Alicia. Did the author do anything to lead you to the clue?" asked Ms. Laird.

"Well," Alicia responded, "he put the words he was defining between hyphens. That made me notice it more."

"You're right. Very often an author will use punctuation to separate the definition from the word being defined. Let's look at another place in our novel where Paulsen has done this. See if you can find an example on page 126."

The teacher reminds students of pleasurable reading experiences in order to help students link skills practice to the pleasures of reading.

The teacher scaffolds learning by using inductive questions that promote critical thinking.

Skillful teaching promotes gradual release of responsibility for learning.

This took students a bit longer to do. Ms. Manser sat next to Carmen, who needed the most reading assistance. They took turns reading sentences and at one point Carmen believed she had found the appropriate example. After Carmen discussed her reasoning and was sure she was correct, she raised her hand.

"I've got it!" Carmen called out. "The part about the dim room. That sentence."

"Good for you, Carmen," responded Ms. Laird. "Read the sentence to us."

> *It was a chalk drawing in a partially lighted room, almost dim, and she was standing near a window looking back over her shoulder at the person looking at the picture.*

"How does the author separate the definition from the word being defined, Carmen?"

"He uses commas," said Carmen.

"Very good. This is quite common for authors to do," said Ms. Laird. "So today we have looked at three ways authors might define words in context for us. I'd like you to record these three ways in your learning logs with an example of each from today's lesson. Who can recall the three examples to share with the class?"

After the students had shared and recorded the three examples, Ms. Laird said, "As we continue reading our novel, I would like you to add to your notebooks other words that you define by using context clues. In a few days we will share what we find, learn some other types of context clues, and improve our vocabulary without using a dictionary."

Shared reading can provide assistance and encouragement that enables all students to make valuable contributions to the class.

Teacher expectations must be appropriate for each student.

Summarizing and recording newly learned concepts and strategies reinforces learning for all students.

Possible Evaluations:

1. Observe and evaluate student responses during this lesson.

2. Students write self-assessment statements comparing their performances on Part A and Part B.

3. Monitor student use of context clues in subsequent reading.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what other ways could Ms. Manser have helped Ms. Laird?

2. What other materials could have been used for this type of skills development?

3. What else might Ms. Manser have done to assist Carmen?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could read news stories to locate word meanings they obtain from context.

2. Students can keep a log of listening experiences that allow them to obtain meaning from context.

3. Students can explore other books by Paulsen to note other examples of context clues.

4. Encourage students to use new vocabulary in their writing and to include context clues for these new words.

Writing a Research Paper
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [12, 17] 3.2 [9, 11] 3.3 [7-8, 10-12, 17, 19]
	3.4 [12, 16, 18, 20, 25] 3.5 [14, 16-17]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2-3, 5-9] 3 [1-5, 8-15] 4 [1-3, 5, 9-10]

Mr. Hernandez, an English teacher, and Ms. Jordan, a social studies teacher, decided to coordinate their students' research activities. Each student would write a common paper for both classes. They would cite significant data from both fields in their papers. The teachers' plan called for students to create an imaginary couple whose biography could serve as a vehicle for making personal connections with history. The students would learn that historical knowledge underlies both fictional and factual accounts. This plan could be implemented as a long-range quarterly assignment or as a short-term project.

At the end of the first quarter, Mr. Hernandez asked his classes to create an imaginary couple. "He" was born in 1900 and died in 1986; "she" was born in 1907 and lived until 1989. Each class named the couple and were told that they would be researching the kinds of things that happened over the course of the couple's life. They were then assigned to groups and drew straws to see which group would study each decade (1900–1909, 1910–1919, and so on) of the fictional couple's life.

The groups were then asked to study their decades in terms of five topics: Political-Economic Situation—World; Political-Economic Situation—United States; Arts and Entertainment; Social Climate (Population, Immigration Patterns, Fashion, Slang, Family Life, etc.); Science and Inventions. Following a mini-lesson on developing research questions, each group member took one aspect to begin investigating and developed a question to use as a starting point.

During one period, the class brainstormed various avenues of research. These included interviews, books, magazines, electronic services, film, television, and record (or CD) covers. Mr. Hernandez found this was a good time to review any bibliographic formats necessary, especially the one for electronic services. Later, Ms. Jordan discussed primary and secondary historical resources with the students.

Soon after, Mr. Hernandez taught a mini-lesson on note taking: summary vs. paraphrase vs. direct quotation. Students practiced these techniques for note taking using available material, such as a text or magazine. Mr. Hernandez also reviewed correct interviewing techniques because many of his students had family members eager to participate in this project.

Focus

Creating fictional characters allows students to personalize history. Note that these "characters" appear twice: once before the research and again before writing the research report. In each case, the characters function as a unique previewing and prewriting device.

Multidimensional study of a decade helps to develop an appreciation for the complexity of social issues/problems.

Developing research questions focuses the researcher's inquiry.

Use of multiple sources to study single topics helps students recognize both the breadth and depth of knowledge and promotes their development as resourceful researchers.

A mini-lesson provides instruction in skills when they are needed and relevant. Students are more likely to attend to instruction when they perceive the need for it.

Mr. Hernandez planned a work session with the library media specialist, Mr. Mulroney. As the two began working with students, Mr. Hernandez found himself reviewing points he had made in the mini-lessons on formats for note taking, while Mr. Mulroney assisted as students began to identify and locate primary and secondary historical resources.

Library media specialists are valuable resource persons for all classes.

In his classroom Mr. Hernandez put up a bulletin board display with the message, *Every note needs a source and a page number!* and placed examples of good notes around it. He also scheduled enough time during other lessons so that he could check on students' progress with their note taking, guiding them when they hit problems, such as making choices about which events to cover and quoting primary vs. secondary sources. The groups also convened for five or ten minutes periodically to trade materials with other group members.

Models of good notes help students create their own. Individualized assistance ensures that all students can successfully complete the project.

Both Mr. Hernandez and Ms. Jordan checked the notes for formatting and content, and Mr. Mulroney conferred with students both individually and in small groups about their research strategies. The colleagues shared insights on student progress.

Opportunities for collaboration among teachers builds mutual support and respect within the school.

To help students connect personally with the time period they had researched and to provide stimulus for creative thinking, Mr. Hernandez asked his students to recall the fictional couple they had created and to refer to their notebooks for details. Then, students wrote letters as if they were the "he" or "she" of the couple during the specific time period they had researched. Various possibilities for each decade were discussed, including a love letter that might have been written during the couple's courtship and a letter written by either person as a grandparent to a grandchild. Students were encouraged to use slang from the period or to draw or find pictures of these fictional people as they might have dressed or acted. This spurred the creation of a box in which students placed toys and other objects of the specified periods, student-written fictional diaries, and baby books.

Students learn that historical research provides a foundation for both fictional and factual writing.

In Ms. Jordan's class, students began writing a draft of their research paper. They took their initial research questions, revised them, and used them as the focus for freewriting. Ms. Jordan instructed students not to refer to their notes at all during this phase so that the language would be their own. This became the part of the process that, according to both teachers, gave students ownership.

By asking students to freewrite without using notes, the teacher allows them to develop their own voices rather than those of the texts they have read.

Over several class periods, both teachers showed students how to use their notes to revise their writing, adding information to existing text and documenting each note immediately. Mr. Hernandez demonstrated this process of documentation on an overhead projector. Once he was convinced students had mastered this, Mr. Hernandez encouraged them to continue working on their papers at home and in school. A due date for the second draft was specified.

Guided instruction leads to independence and mastery.

On that date, the groups reconvened to revise one another's papers for form and content. Next, the groups edited one another's papers for mechanics, grammar, and usage. Finally, polished papers were submitted. As a concluding activity, the class discussed ways in which the imaginary couple facilitated writing the research paper.

Possible Assessments:

1. Use rubrics constructed by the teachers and librarian for scoring the papers. Distribute the rubrics to students *before* they begin their research.

2. Have students write a pre- and post-research statement explaining what they know about the process of writing a research paper. Students can compare the two letters to evaluate their own learning.

3. Evaluate students' fictional correspondence and diaries for historical accuracy.

4. Use a checklist to guide students in the research process.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How might this project be further extended to include other areas of the curriculum?

2. How might this project affect students' views of history?

3. How could an English teacher effectively accomplish this project without the assistance of a social studies teacher?

4. How else might the school library media specialist participate in this project?

Extension Activities:

1. Student groups might be reconvened and asked to cooperatively write an overall introduction describing the project and providing introductions to each decade. Then, all of the papers, along with the collaborative writing, might be bound to create a compendium of the 20th century.

2. Students could choose a time period important in their family history and select an aspect of that period to investigate.

3. Students could contact historical societies to obtain materials on specific time periods.

4. Students could view films on the time periods to compare the filmmakers' version of that time period to their own understanding of it.

Writers must address issues of content/organization and revision before concerning themselves with matters of editing and publishing.

When students reflect on their learning processes, they can consciously and independently apply them in new situations.

Developing a Rubric to Analyze Infomercials
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 15] 3.2 [10-13] 3.3 [7, 13, 16] 3.5 [9-10, 15]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 7-14] 4 [2-4, 10]

As part of a unit designed to teach persuasive techniques and to encourage critical listening and viewing, Mr. Risha's English class had been studying various propaganda techniques (e.g., connotative and slanted language, half-truths, testimonial, repetition, transfer, and types of appeals). Students defined terms and discussed examples that they and Mr. Risha had collected from advertisements and articles in newspapers and magazines. Now, Mr. Risha's class would learn how to critically view infomercials and would develop a rubric for analyzing them.

Focus

After the students demonstrated an ability to recognize and identify a number of propaganda techniques, they viewed an infomercial video. Mr. Risha planned to show it twice. The first time students watched and listened simply as an audience, without note taking or interruptions. A follow-up class discussion established what the infomercial was promoting, who the presenter was, what kinds of endorsements were offered, what beneficial claims were made, and what visuals were used.

Class discussion can generate and enrich ideas and lead to more discriminating viewing.

At this point, Mr. Risha asked the class to think about how they could evaluate the infomercial and to make a list of categories that they could use for this purpose. The students broke into small groups to share their ideas and to create charts that included important categories for critical listening and viewing.

Classification enables students to organize their ideas.

Circulating among the groups, Mr. Risha encouraged the students to include such categories as the credibility of the speaker; persuasive techniques; types of language used (e.g., slanted vocabulary, half-truths, qualifiers, and actual facts); and visual and sound effects. For each category on the chart, students provided space for notes and comments. When the groups finished, Mr. Risha told the groups to bring their charts to class the following day.

By circulating as small groups work, the teacher is able to guide students and keep them on a productive path.

The next morning, Mr. Risha invited the students to review their charts in order to create a rubric for evaluating infomercials. After comparing the groups' charts, the class created a single chart with such headings as "credibility," "authority of the speaker," and "types of language used." Next, they devised a rubric based on their class chart, and the students determined where on the rubric to place each element. While discussing their rubric, students periodically recalled other infomercials they had seen that had similar characteristics.

Clearly identified and defined criteria are a necessary foundation for a valid rubric. When students create their own rubric, they become more conscious of the need for criteria and more proficient critical thinkers.

A few days later, the students viewed the infomercial for a second time. This time the students took notes and used their class-generated rubric to analyze the video. After the class viewed the video the second time, Mr. Risha urged them to use their notes and rubric in a discussion of the information. He directed students to be more critical and to offer specific examples in support of their conclusions. The lesson finished with the students writing journal entries reflecting on the effect of taking notes and using a rubric to analyze the infomercial.

Journal writing gives students opportunity to synthesize and reflect on their new learning.

Possible Assessments:

1. Review group evaluation charts for completeness.

2. Monitor the abilities of small groups to work cooperatively with the other groups to achieve a class goal.

3. Evaluate students' use of the rubric to analyze another infomercial.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can the teacher help students become more conscious of the audio message presented in a primarily visual presentation?

2. How would the outcome of this experience have been different if Mr. Risha had created the rubric himself?

3. How might students be encouraged to develop valid criteria for evaluating a speaker's qualifications?

Extensions Activities:

1. The class could work in small production teams to create their own infomercials on topics of their choice. The infomercials could be videotaped and then evaluated by classmates.

2. Students could compare and contrast infomercials designed to appeal to different audiences (e.g., children, career women, and sports enthusiasts). They could then write an informercial for the same product but appeal to an audience other than the original one.

3. Students could research the similarities and differences between infomercials and other forms of advertising.

The Hero's Quest and Global Literature
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 13, 15, 20] 3.2 [11] 3.3 [7-8]
	3.4 [18, 21, 23, 26-27, 31-32] 3.5 [8, 13]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-4, 7-14] 4 [1-3, 9-10]

Ms. Zimmerman, an English teacher, wanted her seniors to understand the concept of a hero, the concept of a hero's quest, and the fact that the hero's quest occurs in many cultures. She designed a thematic world literature unit based on the concept of "The Hero's Quest."

Ms. Zimmerman began by asking students to brainstorm the characteristics they believe a hero possesses. As students called out ideas, she listed their suggestions on the board. Next, she asked the students to think of characters in movies or books that exhibit these characteristics. During the class discussion, Ms. Zimmerman asked, "What keeps the movie or novel going? What provides the action?" Students realized that each movie or novel hero they had mentioned was on some kind of a journey; each was going after something that was important and that often had value to many people. They also noted that these heroes had many difficulties reaching their goals. "That's right," said Ms. Zimmerman. "Heroes typically go on a quest." She wrote the word *quest* on the board. Then she asked students to add to their list of heroic characteristics things that would describe the hero's quest.

Using the student-generated list of heroic characteristics, Ms. Zimmerman then asked the students to compare their list to the basic characteristics and experiences of a hero that literary scholars identify. She distributed a handout containing these commonly accepted characteristics and experiences: a person of high rank and/or mysterious origin who goes on a journey, searches for a goal, may find that the goal reached is not the one expected, encounters many obstacles along the way, often is accompanied by a companion part of the way, has a descent into darkness, may suffer a physical or spiritual wound, and displays vulnerability. After comparing the two lists, students were pleased to see the parallels between their list and that of the scholars.

In the past, Ms. Zimmerman had introduced her students to the concept of the quest through examples from British and Western Literature, such as *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, *Oedipus Rex*, or *Beowulf*. This year, she decided to supplement this traditional reading list with examples from global and modern literature. She developed a list of parallel texts from other cultures and times, including: *Gilgamesh*, *The Mahabharata* (excerpts), *The Ramayana*, *The Awakening*, *Siddhartha*, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Focus

The teacher activates prior knowledge based on students' common literacy experiences to provide the foundation for learning a new concept.

By allowing students to see how much they know, the teacher builds their self-confidence as learners.

Cross-cultural reading on a common theme promotes deeper understanding of the universality of the human experience.

Because of time constraints, Ms. Zimmerman decided to have the whole class study two works together and then have students select a third work to read independently. The class read *Beowulf*, an English epic, and one more-modern quest story, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Students read *Beowulf* first, discussing the quest motif as it developed throughout the story and elements of the hero's quest in the epic. Although the focus of the unit was on the theme of "The Hero's Quest," Ms. Zimmerman also reviewed literary devices that the epic presented. The classical hero in *Beowulf* pursued an external quest. The second work provided a contrast. Through class discussions of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, students began to see that a quest can also be internal. As Janie, the main character, searches for the "right man," she learns that she must rely on herself. Thus, Janie makes an internal discovery about herself, making this a personal quest story.

After using these two works to model how to focus on the elements of a hero's quest, Ms. Zimmerman asked students to select a title from a prepared reading list or to suggest another title with the same theme. Students reading the same selection then formed groups and met periodically to discuss their texts. After several days of group discussion, each group made a presentation to the whole class in which they summarized the story they read and then identified elements of the hero's quest in their text. Some students integrated a visual component, such as a chart, picture, video, or hypertext.

By providing guided practice through the reading of whole texts, the teacher prepares students for subsequent independent reading and discussion of the same genre.

Careful selection of text broadens students' understanding of theme.

Possible Assessments:

1. Assess understanding by asking students to create and present a visual presentation of the hero's quest in either Beowulf or Their Eyes Were Watching God.

2. Assess understanding by asking students to apply the elements of a hero's quest to the experience of a contemporary (real or fictional) character.

3. Monitor contributions of group members to small-group discussions for quality and quantity.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are some other ways high school teachers can help students understand commonalities among works of literature from diverse cultures and times?

2. How can nontraditional or alternative methods of assessment be used in conjunction with oral and written presentations to assess the students' understanding of literary elements?

3. How would learning outcomes change if the teacher handed out the scholar's list at the onset of the unit?

4. In what ways might the teacher ascertain whether students can independently apply what they have learned?

Extension Activities:

1. Small groups of students could prepare an annotated bibliography of literary works that contain a hero's quest.

2. Students could research the historical era in which one of the three heroes' quests is set.

3. In small groups, students could script and perform scenes from one of the three heroes' quests.

Resources:

Campbell, Joseph. (1988). The power of myth. New York: Doubleday.

Stillman, Peter R. (1985). Introduction to myth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Writing and the Internet
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7] 3.2 [6-7] 3.3 [6, 10-12, 18]
	3.4 [4, 8-9] 3.5 [17]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [1-4, 6] 3 [2, 4-5, 10, 12-14] 4 [1-3, 10]

When Ms. Wann's freshman English class was looking for pen pals in another part of the country, she decided to combine this writing-for-a-real-audience project with a lesson on using the Internet for locating information and using electronic mail (e-mail) for correspondence.

Focus

Working with the school's library media specialist, Ms. Wann arranged to take her ninth graders to the media center for two days. There the library media specialist, Mr. Kimble, and Ms. Wann demonstrated how to use a search engine (e.g., Yahoo or Alta Vista) to find information about high schools in other parts of the country. Ms. Wann showed students how to find information about a high school on the Internet by accessing the website of the students' own high school. She found the website under *New Jersey: Education: Secondary Schools*. Students in the class who had experience conducting Internet searches helped those who were inexperienced. Since Ms. Wann planned to model throughout this project, she selected a teacher as her Internet pen pal.

When classroom teachers and library media specialists work collaboratively on projects, they model cooperative behaviors that are necessary in the workplace.

Authentic writing experiences give students genuine reasons for learning.

After reading their school's website and understanding what type of information was available, the students formed teams based on the area of the country they wanted to contact. Each team of students found a website for a school in another part of the country and then obtained the name of a contact person and an e-mail address for the school. Other students found pen pals by using *Classroom Connect* and listservs. Next, the students used e-mail to arrange contact with a class interested in communicating electronically with pen pals. The correspondence was then established with the approval of the teachers and parents.

Grouping based on shared interest in a topic ensures that students will move flexibly from one group to another as the topic changes.

Ms. Wann's students continued to communicate regularly with students across the country, and Ms. Wann continued her teacher-to-teacher e-mailing. At times, students corresponded on an agreed-upon topic, such as comparing their sports teams; other times, they discussed topics of their own choice. The teams assisted each other by making editing and content suggestions. With parental permission, some students exchanged photos. Periodically, students in Ms. Wann's class reviewed their saved e-mail file and selected pieces to share with each other.

The act of talking about writing enhances its development as an object of conscious thought.

Once students became proficient at working independently, Ms. Wann encouraged them to continue writing their pen pals even when the class's formal instruction on the Internet was completed. Mr. Kimble agreed to arrange computer time in the media center for those who were interested in doing this but did not have access to the Internet at home.

Possible Assessments:

1. Have students periodically review their electronic correspondence and use the file as the basis for a reflective essay concerning what they have learned about their correspondents who live in another part of the country.

2. Have students reflect on the differences between corresponding by computers and corresponding in traditional ways. Monitor the discussion for indication of students' ease and facility with both mediums.

3. Use a pre- and post-assessment survey to compare students' ability to search the World Wide Web and to use e-mail.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could teachers more fully integrate this writing activity with other parts of the curriculum?

2. What impact might corresponding by e-mail have on the writing development of students with different learning styles?

3. How could this project be expanded to increase students' knowledge of other technologies, e.g., video conferencing, sending attachments, and creating listservs?

Extension Activities:

1. This activity could also apply to international pen pals and could be done in foreign languages as well as English.

2. Students could also investigate how businesses use cyberspace in their communications.

3. This activity might also motivate students to revise their school's website on the Internet or to create one if their school does not have one.

4. Students could produce a newsletter with stories, interviews, and anecdotes based on what they discovered through their e-mail correspondence.

Teacher to Teacher: **Introduction of Literary Perspectives**
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.4 [20-21, 29, 31-32]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	3 [1-3, 7-14] 4 [10]

Teachers at a New Jersey high school were discussing the new language arts literacy content standards, especially 3.4.29. Ms. Smith-Markham and Mr. Caruso, freshman English teachers, were particularly interested in how to introduce different literary perspectives to their students. They identified six critical viewpoints they felt freshmen should begin to work with: formalist, biographical, historical, sociological, gender, and reader response. They felt an informal introduction to these viewpoints would be most appropriate for ninth graders.

Focus

"Perhaps we are already doing this," remarked Ms. Smith-Markham. "Think about when we teach *Great Expectations* or *A Raisin in the Sun*. The students investigate authors' lives as well as the times in which they wrote. They also explore the time period in which the stories are set and the social structure of these times. When you think about it, we are introducing the novel or play through a biographical, historical, and sociological perspective."

Collaboration gives teachers opportunities to reflect on their own teaching.

"That's right," said Mr. Caruso. "When I introduce *Great Expectations*, we spend time learning about the conditions and social classes of Victorian England. When we read *A Raisin in the Sun*, students study the movement of African Americans to northern cities and suburbs."

"Yes," agreed Ms. Smith-Markham. "Students often note the portrayal of women in these texts, which is looking at literature from the viewpoint of gender criticism. In fact, this is a perspective that generates the most lively class discussion and extended writing, particularly after students have done some research. Also after we have read and experienced the story, we sometimes do a close reading of the text, using a formalist approach to consider style, character, plot, imagery, and motif."

Students should first experience the text for enjoyment of it before beginning any formal analysis of it.

Mr. Caruso added, "I think what we need to do now is to be more explicit with our students about the different ways in which they 'read' text. We can use the labels or terms for the different forms of literary criticism, but we probably shouldn't put undue emphasis on them. I am going to have my students keep a section of their response journal where they record and label student responses from different perspectives. Later, they can use their response and perspective notes for writing about the text… and even guiding their reading of another text."

Sharing ideas generates new ideas for more effective teaching.

"This discussion has given me another idea," said Ms. Smith-Markham. "Let's talk more about this later."

Possible Assessments:

1. Review response journals and notes for evidence of student understanding of multiple perspectives.

2. Review students' written analysis for evidence of a particular perspective.

3. Monitor students' increasing use and understanding of multiple perspectives when reading other texts.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What literary experiences in the elementary and middle grades might prepare students for the study of multiple perspectives described here?

2. Why did these teachers decide on an indirect approach for introducing literary criticism with their students?

3. How can secondary English teachers at all grade levels work together to develop student understanding of literary criticism?

Extension Activities:

1. Teachers could present their ideas for discussion and extension at a staff development workshop.

2. Teachers could videotape their classroom discussion of literature for later analysis of instructional scaffolding and student learning.

3. Administrators could provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on other standards and indicators and the development of these throughout the secondary grades.

Thematic Unit: Analyzing Persuasive Speaking and Writing

Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [6-7, 9, 13-16, 18] 3.2 [9-13] 3.3 [10-13, 15, 17, 19] 3.4 [21-22, 25, 30-31]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1-2, 8] 3 [1-3, 8, 10-14] 4 [1-3, 5, 7, 9-11]

Mrs. Ross' students came to her English class very excited about the candidates for junior class president who had just given their campaign speeches in the auditorium. Her students were critically examining the content of these speeches as well as the way in which they were presented. Mrs. Ross felt this would be a good time to begin a unit on persuasive speeches, one she hoped to coordinate with the social studies teachers.

Focus

She discussed the campaign speeches with the students and encouraged them to elaborate on their reactions to the speeches during journal writing. During the rest of the period, they shared these reactions and brainstormed how the candidates might have improved their speeches.

The next day, Mrs. Ross built upon the previous day's activities by having students begin to explore Patrick Henry's speech and Thomas Paine's political literature. Students were currently studying these two figures in their U.S. history class. Mrs. Ross and her social studies colleague, Mrs. Guerro, had agreed that Mrs. Ross would help students to analyze these speeches for rhetorical devices such as repetition, parallelism, restatement, and rhetorical questions. In social studies, the students would investigate the effects of Patrick Henry's speech on the public and, therefore, on the American Revolution.

The inclusion of primary historical sources in an English class extends students' understanding of the broad boundaries of literature.

Mrs. Ross' class began by reading Patrick Henry's *Speech in the Virginia Convention*. Most students were familiar with Henry's famous line "…give me liberty or give me death," but they had never read or heard the entire speech before.

After students had read the speech closely, Mrs. Ross helped them identify the rhetorical devices used for emphasis; and the class discussed how these devices made the speech effective. The students considered the audience to whom the speech was being delivered and Patrick Henry's reported manner of delivery. Then several students volunteered to role-play Patrick Henry delivering the speech. The class discussed these performances and then worked in small groups to define effective content and delivery of persuasive speeches. Next, the class then collaborated on a rubric they could use for critiquing their own persuasive speeches. Students began planning speeches that they would present to the class. After students identified an issue they felt strongly about, such as dumping waste off the New Jersey coastline or giving seniors extended privileges, Mrs. Ross encouraged them to incorporate into their own speeches some of the devices Patrick Henry used. She also allotted time for the students to

Careful guided instruction prepares students for independent application of new skills.

Student products are likely to be of higher quality when students have participated in making choices about them.

research their topics in the library media center.

While students planned and wrote their speeches, Mrs. Ross moved around the room to help individuals. When students were ready, they reviewed their writing with a partner before presenting their speeches to the class. During the oral presentations, students had a copy of the rubric, and they rated each other on the effectiveness of their speeches. This feedback was shared with each speaker.

Following the presentations, the class read excerpts from Thomas Paine's *The Crisis*. Again, Mrs. Guerro planned with Mrs. Ross so that the reading in the English class would parallel the social studies discussion of the effects of political literature on the American Revolution. Students compare persuasive devices used by Thomas Paine and Patrick Henry, particularly the uses of aphorism and metaphor in Paine's essay.

As an extension of this unit, students wrote persuasive essays using as many rhetorical devices as appropriate to sway their audience. Mrs. Ross explained at the beginning of the assignment how the final products would be assessed. Students then selected a topic, researched it in the library, identified the audience, prewrote, drafted, revised, and edited. During revising and editing, students met with peer editors for feedback. The final essay as well as the earlier drafts were submitted to the teacher. In addition, students attached a reflective piece that explained the kinds of changes that were made from first to final draft and how these changes improved the essay.

Both teacher assistance and peer feedback contribute to student achievement of learning goals.

The connections of speaking, listening, writing, reading, and viewing fuel growth in all areas of literacy.

The process of reflecting upon one's learning heightens metacognitive awareness and enhances critical thinking.

Possible Assessment:

1. Use the class-constructed rubric for scoring students' other persuasive speeches.

2. Assess the students' persuasive essays using the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric.

3. Review students' reflective pieces for evidence that students have become more conscious of their learning.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What opportunities are available for connecting with colleagues in other disciplines to prepare parallel assignments?

2. What are the benefits of a teacher collaborating with students to construct a rubric?

3. What resources could help students construct scoring rubrics?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could videotape a persuasive speech from CSPAN or another cable news source, analyze the tape, and select a five-minute segment of the taped speech to present to the class.

2. Students could identify and analyze the rhetorical features of a speech from a movie about politics, such as The American President, All the King's Men, or The Manchurian Candidate.

3. Teachers could arrange to have presentations videotaped so that students could self-assess their own work.

Thematic Unit: **Study of Literature**
<div align="right">Secondary</div>

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [13, 15, 19-20] 3.2 [11, 13] 3.3 [10-15, 17, 19]
	3.4 [18, 22-23, 25, 27-28, 31-32] 3.5 [12-16]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-5, 8-15] 4 [1-3, 5-7, 9-10]

As part of a grade eleven English unit on human conflicts, Mr. Johnston created thematic learning packets that students would use as tools for exploring war in literature. Students were to select a novel or topic for an in-depth analysis. The learning packets included the themes of the Vietnam War, Minorities at War, and the following war novels: Cormier's *The Chocolate War*, Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. The learning packets contained a learning contract, forms, suggested methods of recording personal progress, and required tasks that were core to each learning packet.

Mr. Johnston provided an overview of the packets and told students they were to complete eight different tasks from a self-selected learning packet over a four-week period. Those tasks included: (1) a written synopsis of the novel or topic, (2) a critical review, (3) a journal, (4) an oral presentation on some aspect of human conflicts found in the literature they read, (5) a visual representation of some part of their reading, (6) an analytical essay, (7) a self-generated statement of a central theme important to the reader, and (8) an original cover design for a folder to hold these items.

Within a two-day period, students had selected their personal learning packets. Students who selected the same literature formed small groups and began to formulate plans of action and time schedules for specific content-focused activities. As a facilitator, Mr. Johnston interacted with students to review their plans, clarify requirements and criteria for performance, comment on written drafts, and offer suggestions that led to a variety of outcomes.

After reading *All Quiet on the Western Front*, three students shared comments and predictions from their journal entries. They then made arrangements to go to the media center to view a film version of the work for comparative analysis. Another trio of students compared their notes from the film version of *The Red Badge of Courage* with their journal responses to the novel before drafting their analytical essays. On another day, this same group got into a heated discussion with the *All Quiet on the Western Front* group about the purpose and value of war. Mr. Johnston suggested a debate, an idea that both groups accepted, and the students began planning for it.

Side notes:

Focus

Themes provide coherence to the works studied that might otherwise be perceived as mere collections of episodes.

When students take responsibility for their learning, they move towards greater independence and maturity.

Student-developed action plans yield greater student commitment and provide cues for teacher feedback and guidance.

Journal writing encourages reading for different purposes.

Studying the same stories in different media provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each medium.

Debate fosters critical thinking and skills in constructing logical argument.

In another instance, a reader of the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* requested library time for additional research and a conference with the teacher to revise the learning packet tasks to conform more closely with his investigation of Malcolm's life. Two other students, having opted for literary works connected with the minorities-at-war theme, also met with Mr. Johnston to discuss ideas for their reading and analysis of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee.* The reader of *The Diary of Anne Frank* prepared and presented an original dramatic monologue by the young victim whose words provided a window to the human conflict of the Holocaust. That same student attempted to create a clay sculpture of Anne. This nonverbal response led the student and others into the art room where they worked with Mrs. Sullivan. Another student learned how to make papier mâché, which he used to replicate Kemmerich's boot from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, while someone else created a model of Archie's black marble box, a symbol of intimidation used in *The Chocolate War.*

Throughout the study, students fashioned objects and images, sketched characters and scenes, wrote, argued, and reflected about their personal journeys through a score of human conflicts often punctuated by the haunting question raised in *The Chocolate War* and debated within the classroom: "Do I dare disturb the universe?"

Research is a viable activity for expanding knowledge and objective analysis.

The fuller the experiences with literature and multiple opportunities to explore it, the more in-depth the appreciation of the work.

When students have opportunity for personal response to literature, they learn to value reading and become lifelong independent readers.

Possible Assessments:

1. Conduct ongoing observations of each student's engagement, motivation, and productivity.

2. Look for evidence of students' abilities to integrate research with their own ideas in their critical reviews and analytical essays.

3. Use a performance assessment rating form for oral presentations and non-verbal products.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could the content and themes in this unit extend student learning in other content areas?

2. How do the learning packets enhance instruction?

3. What technology extensions might be incorporated?

Extension Activities:

1. Students' critical reviews, monologues, and analytical essays could be published as a class collection. This would require peer and teacher conferencing, revising, and peer editing.

2. The Anne Frank focus opens the door for expanded Holocaust studies and for studying genocide around the world.

3. In preparation for a discussion about the effects of education on human relations, students could use the Internet to research what international organizations are doing to reduce global illiteracy.

Interviews
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [14, 16-18, 21-22] 3.2 [9, 11-12] 3.3 [7]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1-3, 10-11] 3 [1-8, 10-14] 4 [1-3, 5, 7, 9-11]

Students in a senior English class were preparing to apply to postsecondary schools or to seek employment. In both instances, seniors would find themselves in an interview situation. In order to help them prepare for this, Mrs. Ali decided to include an interview unit in her English IV course. In this unit, seniors would assess their personal strengths and practice communicating them to others in situations that modeled real life, such as college admissions or employment.

Focus

Mrs. Ali began the unit by asking students to describe the process for applying to a college or for a job and to decide whether any parts of the process made them anxious. Students identified the parts of the process as completing the application, taking tests, writing a personal essay for college application, and being interviewed. The tests and interviews were their greatest concerns.

Instruction is more meaningful and yields greater student participation when it is connected to the students' background experience.

Mrs. Ali responded to their concerns by remarking, "Well, you have had practice with taking tests since you first started school, and I know that some of you are studying books, taking practice tests at home, and even taking review courses for the SATs. But what about the interviews? What practice have you had with that?" A few students indicated they had been on job interviews; some had already had a college interview. These students elaborated on their experiences. Then Mrs. Ali asked, "Would it be helpful to you if we spent some time reviewing and practicing interviewing techniques and perhaps inviting in some guest speakers who are very knowledgeable about interviews?" The students appeared eager for these opportunities.

Mrs. Ali next asked students why they thought interviews were difficult. Typical comments were, "You have to talk about yourself." Or, "They ask personal stuff, and it's hard to think of a good answer on the spot." To help them address these concerns, she had students free write in response to varied prompts: When I have free time, how do I choose to spend it? In which subject do I receive the best grades? In what subject in school did I have to work the hardest to learn? What are the two most important things that I have learned from a job?

When students have opportunities to articulate problems, they are more apt to solve them.

Freewriting allows writers to write down all of their ideas on a topic without fear of judgment.

From their written responses, students were to identify their strengths. Then in pairs, they shared the things they had identified. Students took turns listening to each other and giving feedback on how well their partners conveyed ideas and interests. When something was not clear, partners asked for elaboration and/or clarification. If a student included negative characteristics as well as strengths, this was noted. After partners both had a

In a supportive environment, students use constructive feedback to rehearse and refine their ideas.

chance to share and respond, they took the feedback they received and began preparing for a school or job interview.

Mrs. Ali informed the class that they would be conducting mock interviews with their partners.

Mrs. Ali helped her seniors prepare for their mock interviews by inviting a speaker from the personnel division of a local company into the classroom to share ideas and strategies for successful interviewing. She then invited the Director of Guidance to share information on college application interviews.

Students benefit from critical listening for real-life purposes.

After the class listened to both guest speakers and discussed common elements of successful interviews, students began preparing for their mock interviews. First, partners practiced serving as the interviewer and the applicant. Each student decided whether s/he would have a school admissions or job application interview. The information the guest speakers had shared with the class helped the students know what types of questions to expect during each type of interview so appropriate questions could be asked.

Switching roles enables students to understand the interviewer's perspective as well as the applicant's.

Pairs then interviewed each other in front of the class, and Mrs. Ali videotaped them so that students could self-assess their performances.

Self-assessment promotes engagement in the learning process.

Following the class presentations, students viewed their performances, wrote a self-assessment, and conferenced with Mrs. Ali about their achievement during this unit.

Teacher conferences can confirm, modify, and extend self-assessments.

Possible Assessments:

1. Have students use the accompanying rubric, "Interview Assessment Scale," as they observe application interviews.

2. Ask students to write a reflective piece based on the feedback they receive from their partners.

3. Evaluate each pair's questions for relevance, depth, and thoroughness.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what other ways could teachers use authentic needs to promote student learning?

2. What other resources might be included in a unit on interviewing?

3. Why is it important for students to speak and to listen in structured environments?

4. How might teachers adapt the rubric to identify appropriate interview behaviors and skills for specific circumstances?

Extension Activities:

1. The practice interviews can be a mini-unit or part of a larger unit that includes writing résumés and letters of application.

2. Students could interview each other concerning their goals and interests and compile a class profile based on these interviews for a website on the Internet.

3. Students could brainstorm other reasons and contexts for interviews, create interview protocols, conduct the interviews, and discuss differences across the interview types.

Interview Assessment Scale

Interviewer's name: _____   Applicant's name: _____

Clarity of Speech

spoke softly	some words unclear	spoke audibly
rapidly	pace was uneven	well-paced
novice	**accomplished**	**expert**

Listening Skills

spoke before the interviewer was finished	answered off the topic sometimes	waited and responded to each question
novice	**accomplished**	**expert**

Language Skills

incorrect grammar/ usage	minor grammar/usage errors	correct grammar/ usage
novice	**accomplished**	**expert**

Impact

body language did not show interest	body language showed interest	body language showed enthusiasm & interest
maintained little eye contact	maintained eye contact	maintained eye contact
novice	**accomplished**	**expert**

Based on this feedback, please write a brief reflection that identifies your strengths and weaknesses and your plans for improving your interview skills.

Business Letters
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7] 3.2 [7-8] 3.3 [10-11, 15, 18] 3.4 [20, 25] 3.5 [17]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1-4, 9] 2 [5-6, 8] 3 [1-5, 8, 10-14] 4 [1-3, 5, 9-10]

Focus

During a four-day introductory visit to the school's Career Center, Mrs. Chang's ninth-grade students learned to write a business letter. For some students in the class, it served as an introduction; for others, it was a review of the essential elements of the business letter form.

To increase the likelihood of their future success, students need to see a link between personal interests and abilities and career choices.

The class spent the first day working with Ms. Derco, the lead career counselor at the center. They began by completing an interest inventory that helped them assess their strengths. They used computer software programs to identify possible career choices and actual jobs that matched their strengths and interests. By the end of the lesson, each student had a printout that included the name and address of at least one professional organization related to one of their career choices.

On the second day, Ms. Derco explained that the students were going to write letters to obtain more information about the careers that interested them. Mrs. Chang asked the students to contribute all that they knew about the form and content of business letters. On the board, she made two columns for student responses, one headed *Form* and one headed *Content.* Students offered such suggestions as "date," "reasons for writing," "inside address," "sign your name," "give them an address," "dear so and so," and "thank you." Mrs. Chang then asked the students, "Is there anything we learned when we were studying persuasive speeches that might help us with these letters?"

Inductive questioning enables students to recognize and apply what they know to real-life tasks.

"I think we need to make an argument about why they should send us information," offered Yusef.

Amy suggested, "We could tell them we have done a career search and that their occupation was one that met our interests."

"Is there anything else we might indicate in this letter?" asked Mrs. Chang.

Miles said, "We should probably be pretty clear about what we want from them."

"That's a good idea," said Mrs. Chang. "I think we're now ready to write our letters. Decide to whom you want to write. Then refer to what we've written on the board to help you with your first draft."

Reference to previous language arts study reinforces understanding and makes explicit the connections between prior knowledge and new learning.

Next, Mrs. Chang asked the students, "How would this letter be different from a letter you would write to a friend or to someone who knows you well?"

Jessica remarked, "Well, I can be pretty casual with my friends. I can use slang and make jokes. I don't think I should do that in this letter."

Tony added, "Yeah, and I have to use good English. I don't have to do that with my friends."

"Good point," said Mrs. Chang. "Jessica and Tony talked about being casual and humorous with friends. Does anyone remember the literary term we used to describe these words?"

"Tone," said Anna.

"Good," said Mrs. Chang. "The tone in a business letter is more formal."

Students then began to write their letters. One student chose to write to the American Association of Cosmetology Schools for information about training to become a makeup artist in the theater. Another wanted to write to the National Restaurant Association to find out about schools as well as on-the-job training to become a chef. A third student, one who loved airplanes, decided to contact the Aviation Safety Institute to ask about different career opportunities in the field of aviation.

After the students had selected an organization and decided what they would request, Ms. Derco gave each student a copy of a business letter template to use in setting up the letter correctly on the computer. She had created the form for the template using the students' brainstorming from the previous day. The students filled in the information for the heading and inside address in the appropriate spaces. The body of the template provided three shaded areas suggesting three paragraphs. It also included the format for the closing.

Students develop knowledge and appreciation of technology when it is used for real-life purposes.

After students completed and printed out drafts of their letters, they were paired to exchange and review each other's writing. The students were told to read their partner's letters as though they were the recipients and then to discuss the clarity and correctness of the writing. After these discussions, the letters were returned for revisions.

When the final drafts were ready, students showed them to Mrs. Chang or Ms. Derco for approval. If the work was judged "letter perfect," the student was instructed to print out two copies and an envelope. One copy was mailed; the other was kept on file in the student's portfolio.

Writing for real audiences helps students understand the importance of using the conventions of standard written English.

Any students who did not complete the assignment by the end of the fourth class period were required to make an appointment with the career counselor to come back during a study period or after school hours to finish.

Possible Assessments:

1. Have students discuss their experiences with identifying their interests, search-ing for a likely career, identifying a source of information about that career, and drafting a letter. Monitor student enthusiasm and learning revealed by student comments.

2. Assess students' reflective pieces that compare first drafts and final letters.

3. Evaluate students' essays in which they discuss the process used by the class for career exploration and other ways in which they might learn about career options.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why should ninth graders be concerned about a career search?

2. How can a teacher help a student whose career expectations are very low?

3. What should the teacher do if there is no response to the letter?

Extension Activities:

1. Students can report to the class on the responses received from the letters sent.

2. This lesson could be the beginning of a larger research project on a particular career choice, either the one for which they sent their letter or another choice identified during their career exploration.

3. Have students write letters requesting information about summer job opportunities.

Peer Collaboration: **Group Projects**
                                                                Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7-8, 13, 15, 18] 3.2 [9, 11, 13] 3.3 [7, 12]
	3.4 [18, 22-23, 31-32] 3.5 [12-14]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1, 3] 3 [1-4, 8-15] 4 [1-3, 5-6, 9-10]

As the culmination of an eight-week unit on elements of the short story, Miss Coats created advertising/marketing teams in her ninth-grade English class to promote popular interest in short stories from the unit. They would develop thematically linked products for one of the following short stories: "The Most Dangerous Game," "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "The Interlopers," "The Gift of the Magi," "A Mother in Mannville," "The Heyday of the Blood," "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Scarlet Ibis," and "The Lady or the Tiger." Miss Coats explained that the project would take about a week of 40-minute class periods and would involve group and independent work.

Focus

She explained the procedure. Four-person teams would be responsible for creating individual artistic projects that share a common one-sentence theme, symbol or logo, and mood. Possible projects that members of the team would create might include a children's book, a tee shirt and cap, trading cards with captions, a board game, a greeting card, a comic strip, a poem or song, a lunch box, or a coffee mug.

Discussion and identification of themes allow students to recognize common aspects of human existence.

On the first day, Miss Coats reviewed the definitions of theme, symbol, and mood. The class discussed the relationship among the three in various stories they had read as well as in current cinema and commercial advertising. Students then filled out short-story survey forms on their favorite three stories in the unit. The survey form included questions exploring possible themes, reasons why the students liked the stories, and a space for freewriting on the moods of the stories.

Use of the survey allows students to reflect over their learning, think critically about their reading experience, and provide input for teacher planning.

On day two, Miss Coats organized the class into teams. Each team was assigned a short story based on their responses on the survey forms. First, team members shared their responses on the survey form, looking for similarities and differences in their views of the assigned story. Next, Miss Coats asked each team to discuss possible illustrations for symbol and mood and to state the theme in a sentence. Once the team decided on the common elements, the team captain helped organize the group to produce three or four different projects.

Through the give-and-take of small-group discussions, students learn to recognize multiple perspectives and gain practice in supporting their own point of view with evidence.

While one group discussed the importance of the color red for the mood and logo of their "Scarlet Ibis" products, another group wrestled with the difficulty of isolating a theme for "The Lady or the Tiger." One member asked Miss Coats whether the theme could be expressed in the form of a question rather than a sentence. Miss Coats reconvened the whole class for a discussion of this possibility.

By day three, students were actively working within their groups on individual projects. A student developing a board game on the "Scarlet Ibis" shared an idea with a student creating a children's book based on the same story. In another group, a student producing trading cards on "The Cask of Amontillado" made sure that her cards depicted different scenes from those shown on her groupmate's greeting cards.

Group work enables students to learn from each other.

By day four, groups were ready to assess and evaluate their progress and process. Within their groups, students discussed what they found most and least challenging about the activity. The team captain recorded their responses in two columns. In a whole-group discussion, the groups seemed to agree on some similar difficulties: The mood in both "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" and "Scarlet Ibis" shifts back and forth. It is difficult to design a logo for a story with more than one symbol. One student asked, "If two readers identify different themes, which theme is correct?" Miss Coats reminded the class that if both readers can find evidence in the text to support their interpretations, then both are valid. She advised students to look for ways to link the different interpretations. Miss Coats recognized that the students needed more time to complete the task, so she extended the project for two more class days. Students used day five to resolve their differences and adjust their projects.

Formative assessment allows students and the teacher to clarify problems and adjust learning goals.

By day six, students had completed artistic projects and were ready to prepare a group presentation of their work. One group argued about the logical order of the product presentations. A member of the group suggested that the group solve the problem by presenting in age-appeal order since all their merchandise catered toward children (game, book, trading cards, lunch box). In this way, she suggested, their marketing strategy could be that the story and its products are "family friendly."

Encouraging students to solve their own presentation problems invites resourcefulness and builds self-esteem.

On the final day, after students had presented their work, the class used a rubric to score the products and presentations and then gave reasons for their scores.

Peer feedback can elicit strong motivation for learning.

Possible Assessments:

1. Observe peer interactions on a daily basis.

2. Assess the theme, logo, and mood of individual projects for depth of under-
standing.

3. Provide students with a self-assessment form focusing on the student's ability
to work productively on group and individual goals.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways does the activity prepare students for problem solving and peer
interactions in the workplace?

2. How does the activity make the information more accessible to visual or audi-
tory learners?

3. Why is this an appropriate language arts literacy activity?

Extension Activities:

1. This project could be extended across the curriculum by engaging the cooper-
ation of the graphic arts and/or business departments.

2. Students could collect copies of current ad campaigns and identify the
theme, logo, and mood.

3. Students could script, perform, and videotape versions of their short story for
class presentation.

Becoming American: Jasmine from India to Iowa
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 15, 20] 3.2 [5-6, 11] 3.3 [3-4, 7-8]
	3.4 [18, 23, 27-28, 31-32] 3.5 [12-14]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-4, 8-14] 4 [1-3, 5-7, 9-10]

Because the heroine in *Jasmine* represents many of the universal struggles encountered by adolescents as they move into adulthood, Mr. Toussaint decided to use the 1989 novel by Indian American author, Bharati Mukherjee, as a key work in his World Literature course.

Focus

Before distributing copies of the book, Mr. Toussaint asked his students to respond to several questions in their journals: (1) What ethnic, national, or group affiliations would you use to help define yourself? Why/On what basis do you feel that you belong to these groups? (2) How did you come to live in America? Why did you or your family decide to come to this country? (3) If you could live anywhere on earth, where would that place be? Why would you choose that place? In small groups, students then shared what they wished from their journals.

Journals help to establish a personal connection to works being read. If students are encouraged to maintain journals while reading a literary piece, they become more active readers.

After a silent reading of the brief first chapter of *Jasmine*, Mr. Toussaint asked his students to brainstorm their initial impressions of the book and its main character while a designated student recorded the group's ideas. A representative of each group outlined that group's "first take" on the board, and the impressions were then compared and contrasted in whole-class discussion.

Reading is a social as well as private experience.

Working together with his students and their academic calendar, Mr. Toussaint plotted a reading chart of the book's chapters and due dates for assignments and for group presentations based on the reading. He then asked students to use the first chapter and the dust jacket notes to identify aspects of the book they wished to explore. Questions raised included: "What does some immigrant girl have to do with me?" "Why does the writer tell her story this way, jumping back and forth in time?" "Why should someone believe what an old man tells her?"

Student involvement in unit planning helps to ensure ownership and motivation.

The answers to these questions, Mr. Toussaint suggested, could be found as the students continued their reading. He reminded the students to write their questions in their journals so they could consider them while reading and discuss the questions upon completing the novel. He added, "As you are reading and ideas occur to you about these questions, jot your ideas down." He then asked students to recall novels they had previously read and discussed earlier in the year and to identify elements common to these novels. Together, they formulated a list of the elements, including story line, themes, characters, structures, style, and setting.

Looking for elements and themes in multiple texts increases knowledge of story structure.

Students were encouraged to keep reading logs on the various aspects of the novel, chapter by chapter. The class was divided into four groups, one considering the portion of the novel that took place in Jasmine's native India, one following her journey from India to Florida, one focusing on her New York experiences, and the fourth and final group, studying the Iowa segment of the book. Since the novel's structure included both straightforward narration and flashbacks, students found the geographic moorings to be very helpful in their comprehension of the novel.

Mr. Toussaint provided class time for the reading/preparation groups to meet twice a week until both the reading and the preparation were completed. Each of the four groups created topical outlines to accompany their presentations and supplemented their presentations with activities that involved peers. These activities included role-playing games, such as character and incident identification through charades.

In the discussion that flowed from the presentations and other activities, students focused on Jasmine's constant invention and reinvention of herself, using her four names, Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase, and Jane, as context clues. One student enlarged the scope of the discussion by recalling Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby, another character who reinvented himself. A film buff in the class remembered reading that in old-time Hollywood, studios chose new names for performers as they started their screen careers and gave as an example John Wayne, who had been Marion Morrison.

Discussion of the violent scenes depicted in the novel, including Jasmine's rape and the death of her Hindu husband in a Sikh-engineered explosion, reinforced the global relevance of the book's elements. The question of violence as a means to a political end was introduced by the team discussing Jyoti's Indian experiences. Other seemingly intractable conflicts, such as those between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Muslims, Serbs and Croats, the Protestant and Catholic Northern Irish, and the Hutus and Tutsis of Rwanda and Burundi, were brought up by various students and linked to the Hindu-Sikh animosity in *Jasmine*.

Certain thematic aspects of the book particularly interested the students: the feminist challenge to the patriarchal order which the title character embodies; the inherent difficulties of learning a new language and new customs; and the struggle to become an American while debating whether to remain true to one's roots. Both the team dealing with Jasmine's New York experience and the team dealing with Iowa posed essentially the same questions: "What did she learn from the men around her?" "What did she come to realize about herself?" "How did she defy the men in her life and become her own person?"

To supplement the novel's portrait of life in rural India, Mr. Toussaint showed his students Satyajit Ray's 1973 film, *A Distant Thunder*, which, while set in Bengal in the World War II–created famine, made students aware of the poverty and caste system that were so much a part of Jasmine's background. Upon completion

By using small groups and providing a range of activities, the teacher promotes maximum student participation.

Students often have a wealth of information that can enrich class discussion.

Quality texts lend themselves to broad discussion.

Involving students' diverse interests in discussion enlarges the spectrum of themes to be found in a literary work.

Students need opportunity to reflect on changes in their thinking as a result of new literary experiences.

of the novel and the film, the students returned to their initial questions about the book and the ideas they had jotted down. They used these notes to reflect on the novel and on changes to their questions as a result of having experienced the text.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor student discussions of their initial and final questions about the novel for changes in understanding.

2. Evaluate student group presentations for clarity of communication.

3. Assess students' understanding of the elements of the novel as reflected in their discussion of Jasmine.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what other ways could the teacher release responsibility for learning to the students?

2. What value is there for a teacher to extend discussion of a literary theme to world events?

3. How can a teacher tell from a student's response whether the student has made connections between the novel and the film?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could see a film based on the immigrant experience, such as America, America; Coming to America; El Norté; Mississippi Masala; and Hester Street. They could then write an essay comparing Jasmine's experiences to those of the main character(s) in the film of choice.

2. Students could generate both visual and print text plotting all of the various points in Jasmine's journey from India to Iowa and the effect that those various places had on the formation of her character.

3. A class debate on the topic, "To assimilate or not to assimilate (to preserve differences) and at what cost?" might be structured. The class could be divided into three groups: the framers/presenters, the pro-assimilationists, and the anti-assimilationists, with the framers deciding which arguments were the more persuasive to them.

4. Students could survey the reviews of Jasmine by professional critics and write an original review as well, or research the critical response to Mukherjee, both as an Indian writer and as an American writer, using Bharati Mukherjee— Critical Perspectives, edited by Emmanuel S. Nelson (1993), as a point of departure.

5. Relatives and/or friends of the students or members of the community at large could be invited to appear as guest speakers, discussing their own experience as immigrants, thus cross-referencing those of Jasmine.

Introducing the Harlem Renaissance:
Setting Literature in a Historical Perspective
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 7] 3.2 [1, 3-4, 6-7, 11, 13] 3.3 [1, 3-4, 7, 10]
	3.4 [1-2, 5, 8-9, 18, 24-25, 27, 31-32]
	3.5 [1-2, 11-12, 16]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	3 [1-3, 10, 14] 4 [1-3]

Students entered Ms. Ryan's junior class to the strains of jazz playing softly in the background. As the music continued, the lights dimmed and a slide show began. Works of art and photographs were projected onto a screen at the front of the room. After ten minutes, the slides froze on an image of a river, the music grew softer, and the students began to hear the words of Langston Hughes's poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." When the poem ended, the slide projector was turned off; and the lights were turned on. Ms. Ryan asked the class to discuss their reactions to this experience and to comment on the relationships between what they had seen and heard. Ms. Ryan told the class, "You have just experienced some of the greatest products of the Harlem Renaissance."

The drama of the multimedia presentation raises interest, stirs curiosity, and motivates learners to want to know more.

Next, Ms. Ryan asked the class to take out their journals and write their definition of the Harlem Renaissance based on their prior knowledge and on what they had just discussed and experienced. She then asked students to share with a partner what they had written and to make any revisions they wanted in their definitions. After the pairs read their definitions to the class, the students discussed common elements of the definitions and particularly interesting observations. Ms. Ryan told the class that they would be studying major works of the Harlem Renaissance, especially works of literature. She noted that during their study they would revisit their definitions to revise and extend them as students became more familiar with that period.

Journal writing provides students with the opportunity to synthesize experience with new information.

Focus

The changes in the definition will give students a tangible record of their own learning.

For homework, Ms. Ryan asked the students to read the background information on the Harlem Renaissance in their literature books and to look up the word *renaissance* in the dictionary. After reading the materials, students were to write down three questions they had about the Harlem Renaissance and to bring these questions to class the next day. Ms. Ryan told students that she planned to use these questions as she prepared future lessons on this period in American Studies.

Augusta Savage

When students create questions based on text, they have an opportunity to reflect on the significance of what they have read.

Possible Assessments:

1. Monitor student contributions to the discussion of the media presentation for evidence of inferential and evaluative thinking.

2. Assess students' ability to extrapolate from the media presentation and the class discussion in order to write an initial definition of the Harlem Renaissance.

3. Use students' three questions as a source of information about what students know and want to know about the period.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What advantages were there to using a multimedia presentation to introduce the topic?

2. What else might have been included in this introductory presentation?

3. Why is the Harlem Renaissance an important period of American Literature?

Extension Activities:

1. Students could conduct independent studies of a novelist or poet who was part of or influenced by the Harlem Renaissance.

2. Students, working in small groups, could research one art form of the Harlem Renaissance (e.g., art, architecture, music, poetry, or theater) and report their findings.

3. The English and social studies teachers could coordinate activities illuminating how particular events or people contributed to the developments of the Harlem Renaissance.

Resources:

Campbell, Mary. (1987). Harlem renaissance: Art of Black americans. New York: Abrams Publishing.

Floyd, Samuel. (1990). Black music in the Harlem Renaissance: A collection of essays. New York: Greenwood Publishing.

William, Michael. (1993). The African-American encyclopedia. New York: Marshall Cavendish.

Conferencing with Student Writing Portfolios
Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [7, 12] 3.2 [3, 8, 12] 3.3 [1-5, 7-10, 12-13] 3.4 [23, 32]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 3 [1-3, 8, 10] 4 [1, 3, 10]

Every year, students in grades 3–12 complete a "Best Works Writing Portfolio." This portfolio includes two pieces of writing from each of the grade levels and a year-end reflection. During the year, students keep working writing folders of all their assignments. At the end of each year, they pull pieces from these folders to put into their "Best Works" portfolios. Key to portfolio completion are three steps: collection, selection, and reflection.

Mr. Daniels, an eleventh-grade English teacher, holds individual conferences for selection and reflection near the end of each marking period. He believes that this makes the final selection and reflection in June easier for the students. In addition, he feels that periodic selection of and reflection on portfolio items helps both the teacher and the student see where growth has occurred and where further instruction and practice is needed. An important part of the process each period is the teacher's conferencing with each student as s/he makes the selection and prepares to write a reflection. Students bring their writing folders to the conference with Mr. Daniels. In the scenario that follows, Mr. Daniels is conferencing with a junior named Niki. Niki has had some difficulty writing, but she wants to improve. This conference occurred in January at the end of the second marking period.

"Well, Niki, I see you have completed several pieces of writing this quarter. Do you have any favorite ones?" asked Mr. Daniels.

"Well, there's really only one that I like a lot," replied Niki.

"Let's take a look at that one. Why don't you get it out and start by telling me what you like about it."

"I feel good about the piece I wrote after we read *The Red Badge of Courage*. I like this essay because I think it was the first time I was able to write about literature, you know, like you asked us to, as literary analysis. Last year, I liked to write about stuff I know about, but I couldn't really write about literature."

"Well, let's have a look at that essay again."

After taking out the essay she selected, Niki read it aloud for Mr. Daniels. He then responded, "I can see why you might want to include this essay in your portfolio. It does show your understanding of the character, and it is more focused than some of your earlier essays. Can you tell me why you think you improved? What helped?"

Focus

Through conferencing, the teacher can guide students to identify the features of proficient writing and to develop awareness of their writing strategies.

Regularly scheduled conferences within the Writing Workshop take place while other students engage in drafting, peer conferencing, and other writing-related tasks.

The teacher invites the student to set the agenda for the conference so the student can engage in self-diagnosis.

Effective teacher questions promote student reflection.

"Our having a chance to talk about the story a lot before we wrote about it made writing easier. Also, I got a lot of feedback from my peer editor as I was revising the essay. I never rewrote an essay three times before."

"You must have liked your ideas to stick with them for three revisions. Do you think that these revisions indicate you have gained confidene in your ability to make effective changes to improve your writing?"

Sometimes students can be helped to recognize personal growth when it is articulated by the teacher.

"Sure. Look at these earlier drafts. I made changes all over them. In fact, I thought I might write about them in my reflective piece."

"Good. You might want to explain in your reflection why you made certain changes and what you learned by doing this. You don't have to comment on every change you made. Pick out two or three changes that you feel made the paper better. Can you show me one now?"

Timely suggestions can help students move from global awareness of a topic to a specific purpose for writing.

"I guess changing my introduction from being real general to being specific like you taught us helped me focus the whole paper."

"That's a good example. Your paper certainly is more focused. I am happy to see this improvement. You did a good job. In your reflection you might want to refer to specific details as you explain how you actually changed it. Before we end our conference, I have one more question: What do you feel you still need help with? What do you need to improve next in your writing?"

Conferences can help students set new writing goals.

"I guess that would be editing more carefully. Now that I sort of understand the structure of the literary essay, I need to check my writing more carefully before doing my final copy, but I don't always catch those errors."

"This is a common concern of many students in this class. I plan to do some mini-lessons on editing that I think will help everyone. Let me know if you find those lessons useful, okay?"

Through conferencing, teachers can assess student needs and plan future instruction.

"Okay. I'm ready to start writing my reflective piece now."

"Keep all your papers. Remember, in June we will go back over all your selections and choose two for the Best Works portfolio that moves on with you next year."

Possible Assessments:

1. Compare a first and final draft of a piece of writing for improvement in organization, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.

2. Use a rubric to evaluate students' self-assessment as revealed by evidence of growth in their reflective pieces.

3. Observe student behaviors during the conference, taking notes on signs of increasing sophistication concerning their writing abilities.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are some other questions students and teachers can focus on during a portfolio conference?

2. How can portfolios be developed for use in other areas of the curriculum?

3. What other types of artifacts might students include in their portfolios for the English/language arts classroom?

Extension Activities:

1. Students review portfolio contents from two or three years ago and write a reflective paper concerning their growth as writers since then.

2. The teacher videotapes student conferences and has students analyze and critique the teacher's strategies.

3. Have students research what other writers have said about their writing processes.

Short Story and Film: Cross-Grade Collaborations
Elementary/Secondary

Language Arts Literacy Indicators:	3.1 [1, 7-8, 10] 3.2 [1, 8] 3.3 [1, 7-8, 18]
	3.4 [1, 23, 26, 32] 3.5 [1, 12, 14, 16]
Cross-Content Workplace Indicators:	1 [1] 2 [2] 3 [1-3, 8-13] 4 [1-3, 6, 9-10]

Ms. Mellody, first-grade teacher, and Mr. Devereaux, eleventh- and twelfth-grade World Literature teacher, decided to have their students work concurrently on multifaceted projects concerning *The Secret of Roan Inish,* the Celtic-based short story and the film that writer/director John Sayles adapted from it. These projects would culminate in a sharing of the projects at the high school.

Mr. Devereaux visited the elementary classroom to introduce *The Secret of Roan Inish* and begin the oral reading of the story. Before beginning to read, he asked the students to think about favorite relatives they liked to see. At the end of the introductory reading, the children responded in a chain of associations—some more appropriate than others—linking the story to their own experiences:

"I visit my grandmother in Florida, and we go to the beach together."

"My family goes to the shore in the summer."

"My brother lives with my father. I miss him."

Since the children would be asked to keep reading logs throughout their school careers, Ms. Mellody and Mr. Devereaux gave the first graders the opportunity to make picture and/or word records as part of their reactions to what they had heard during the reading. These pictures/word records would become the basis for the children's end-of-project chap books and a class banner.

Both the elementary and secondary students shared the same set of texts, the high schoolers reading the text aloud on their own, the elementary students having the text read aloud to them by their teacher and also taking the text home for parental reading and reinforcement. In both cases, the teachers wanted to approximate the tradition of oral storytelling for the students by having them hear the story as it was read aloud.

The World Literature students discussed the universal thematic components of the story: the search for a lost home and family and the interaction of the human and natural worlds. Having already met the high-level challenges of *King Lear* and *Ran,* the Japanese film adaptation of the Shakespearean play, the World Literature students recognized the archetypal components of *The Secret of Roan Inish.*

"Reunion with a separated family member—that's one thing they both have in common," offered one student.

Focus

Cross-age collaboration provides authentic audiences for communications at both levels.

For primary-grade students, oral reading allows access to texts too difficult for their independent reading and provides models of good literary language.

For secondary students, the opportunity to read aloud on their own connects them to the oral language tradition.

"If you subtract the passage of time and the advance of technology, you can see that all these stories are myths," commented another.

"Shakespeare lived only a few hundred miles away from the islands in the story," remarked one particularly geographically astute student.

"Yeah, and if you believe James Tyrone, Sr., Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic anyway," countered the resident class wit/wise guy.

The first-grade children worked on their reading logs both in the classroom and at home since parents and other family members shared the reading responsibilities with the classroom teacher. Each child then created his or her own brochure or chap book based on his or her reading log responses to the story, allowing for individual expression and interpretation. The students also created a group banner illustrating the characters and events in the story, working together with Ms. Mellody and with their art teacher.

Parental involvement reinforces the home-school connection and should be promoted at every opportunity.

The elementary school children were the guests of the high school students at a communal celebration, featuring the first graders' banner and chap books, a viewing of the film, and a buffet of ethnic and American food, prepared by Mr. Devereaux and his students. Invitations to individual first graders were answered with thank-you notes drawn or written by the first graders. Then, during the celebration, the high schoolers read the first graders' chap books and wrote back to them on a sheet of paper attached for these messages.

Possible Assessments:

1. Ask high school students to complete survey/response sheets assessing the value and success of the enterprise and commenting on things learned from the experience.

2. Monitor and record notes on the participation of individual high school students in the class discussions.

3. Ask students at both levels to discuss how the film changed or confirmed the mental pictures they got from the story. Assess their responses.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could this activity be modified for use with literature of other cultures?

2. How can skill building be incorporated into the project?

3. What other kinds of activities lend themselves to cross-grade collaboration?

Extension Activities:

1. The teachers can videotape the viewing/celebratory session for later discussion with each of the classes.

2. Guest speakers, including family members or friends of the students, or members of the community, can be invited to talk about their previous homes in this or other countries.

3. Librarians and other media specialists can be invited to offer their input as to possible choices of material from other cultures and to serve as resource persons for student research in children's ethnic literature, film, and music.

4. Students can write their own myths and share them with another age group, using storytelling techniques.

Resource:

Fry, Rosalie K. (1995). The Secret of Roan Inish. New York: Hyperion.